MARK GREEN ON HOW TO FIX OUR DEMOCRACY

The Nation.

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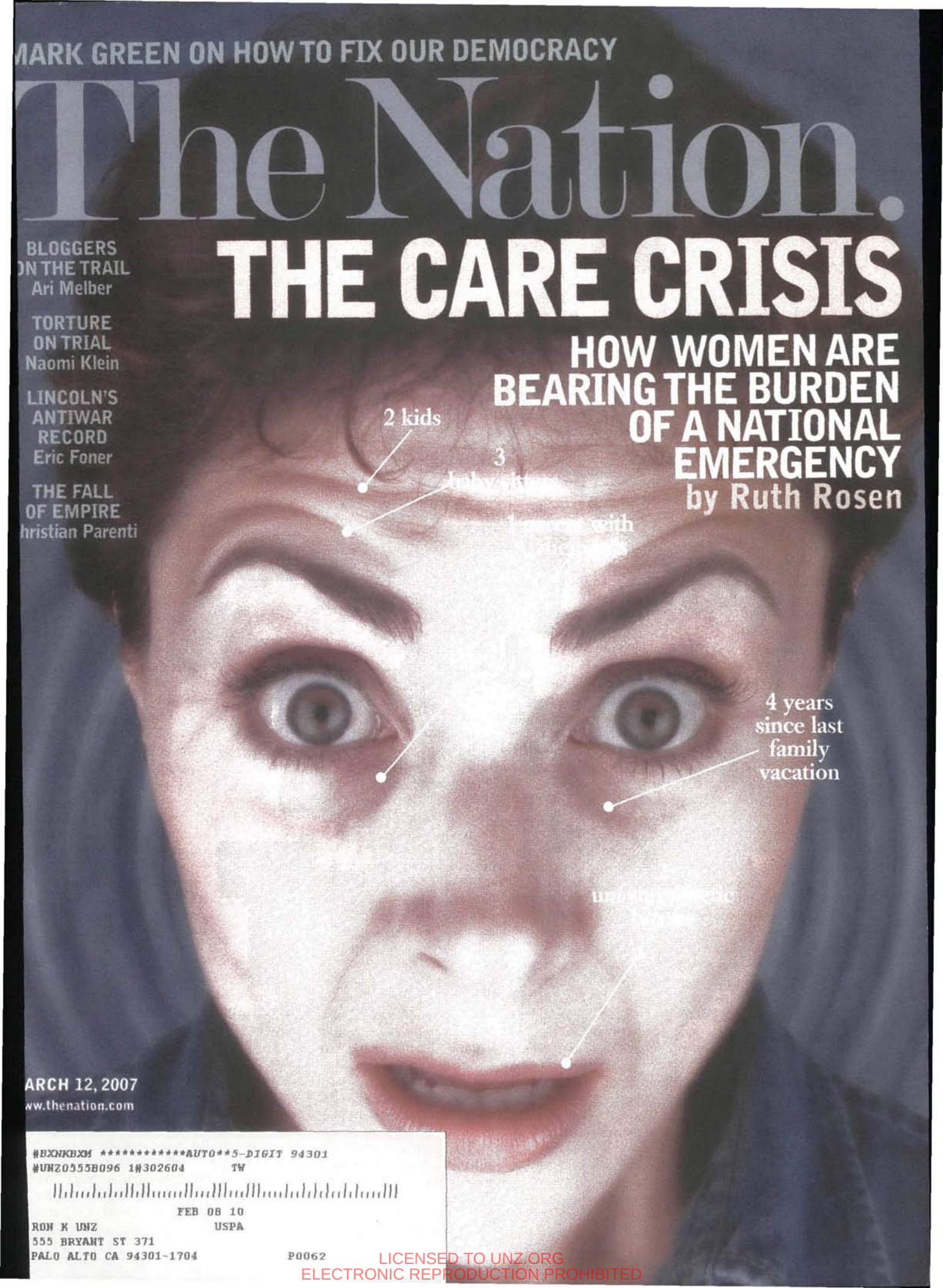
HOW WOMEN ARE BEARING THE BURDEN OF A NATIONAL EMERGENCY

by Ruth Rosen



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EXCHANGE

Letters

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Should Democrats Do Dixie?

Washington, DC

■ The economics-based argument for a Southern Democratic revival—which, given the loyal support of African-Americans, means a Democratic surge among white Southerners—has two prongs. "New South" theorists argue that the historical bifurcation between the region's post-slavery agrarian economy and the industrial-technological economies of the rest of the country is fading, and thus newly affluent whites in Georgia will soon be voting like their Connecticut cohorts. The second, advanced in this magazine eloquently albeit anecdotally by Bob Moser, in his article "The Way Down South: A Populist Route to Democratic Revival" [Feb. 12], might be called the "old South" prong, which argues that white voters trapped in the stagnant portions of the Southern economy make ideal targets for the economic populist appeals Democrats now realize are crucial to their nascent majorities.

Before proceeding, consider the regional voting patterns of white Americans in recent presidential elections. For the past three decades, white voters of the Midwest and West have voted very similarly and, not surprisingly, down the middle between a less Democratic Northeast and a more Republican South. Continuing this trend, in 2004 George W. Bush captured 55 percent of the white vote in these twenty-five states, while his share in the Northeast was slightly lower, just 50 percent—a figure that essentially mirrored his performance among the entire electorate. Yet 70 percent of white Southerners voted Republican in 2004. That means their preferences deviated three times more from the Midwest–West benchmark than did those of white Northeasterners. (Remember this factoid the next time some television blowhard scoffs that the Northeast is "out of touch" with the rest of the country.) That's the magnitude of the problem. So, how to solve it?

The "new South" answer is passive, relying as it does on an economic revolution that is under way but has yet to run its course. By contrast, with plenty of poor whites already in the region, Moser's plan for conversion via economic populism is immediate. The problem, however, is that the transformation Moser envisions is easier to prescribe than effect. The reasons are manifold, but space permits me to handle just two: race and unionization.

Moser brushes quickly past race, a curious oversight given that most every study of political tolerance (racial or otherwise) reveals a strong, positive relationship between socioeconomic status and tolerance. As Steve Jarding and Dave "Mudcat" Saunders painstakingly chronicle in *Foxes in the Henhouse*, poverty in the rural white South is both appalling and appallingly resilient. Combine high poverty rates with their concomitant lower levels of racial tolerance, mix in residual tensions from the civil rights movement, and you understand why the poorest region of the country is the most Republican—despite the massive head start African-American voters provide Democrats.

In fact, analyses of the 2004 National Election Study reveal that neither attitudes on national defense nor abortion explained the Republican presidential preferences of white Southerners; negative racial attitudes did. How else to explain that in Mississippi, where poor whites and blacks live alongside each other, the former vote overwhelmingly Republican while the latter just the opposite? If economic populist appeals were unmediated by race, such glaring polarities simply could not exist.

Organized labor's meager presence in the South also reduces the appeal of economic populism. For the past half-century, the Southern states have consistently ranked among the least unionized. The GOP's chokehold on working-class white males is significantly weaker among retirees, union members and those living in union households. Because labor leaders organize voters around populist themes, their relative absence makes the "old South" economic appeal a much harder sell.

In 2006 nonunion-household voters split between the parties (49 percent each), but union households broke for the Democrats 64 percent to 34 percent. Connect this fact with low Southern unionization and, sure enough, in their party's best midterm cycle in thirty-two years, Democrats carried every region but one—the South, which they lost by eight points, according to exit polls.

Notice that many competitive areas for Democrats in the South—central and south Florida; the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill tech triangle; Northern Virginia; campus towns from Athens to Austin—have in common a base of non-native Southerners who emigrated from other parts of the country or other countries. To borrow the title of Moser's essay, "the way down South" for Democrats is to continue importing non-Southerners to the region because the white South, poor or affluent, is not quite ready to rise again in sufficient numbers to cheer Democrats' populist appeals.

THOMAS F. SCHALLER, *author*
Whistling Past Dixie: How Democrats Can Win Without the South

Cincinnati

■ When Bob Moser wrote about how his friend in Alabama immediately grasped the inevitable John Kerry electoral disaster when Kerry won the Iowa caucuses in 2004, he said it all.

Why do the Dems persist in pushing forward elite candidates like Ted Kennedy, Michael Dukakis, John Kerry and now Hillary Clinton, who cannot win nationally? It's really quite simple. The Iowa caucuses are not representative enough of rank-and-file national Democrats, and New Hampshire's population is concentrated in the south of the state, in the Boston media market. New Hampshire Democrats are virtually all white. Plus, many are Massachusetts natives who moved north for jobs, retirement or cheaper housing.

So, the question is: Why should this understandable preference for native sons and daughters by New Hampshire Dems cast a shadow over the party that prevents it from embracing progressive/populist candidates from outside the Northeast who could win nationally?

These are the types of regional, class and racial/ethnic issues that Democrats and progressives need to discuss honestly. Until we scrap the losing caucus/primary system, the Dems will probably continue to pass over progressive candidates who can win nationally on the order of senators Jim Webb, Jon Tester, Sherrod Brown and Claire McCaskill in favor of losing presidential candidates like Hillary, Dukakis, Kerry, Ted Kennedy and perhaps Barack Obama (the jury's still out on this one). These elite Dems are good people who represent their home states very well; but history is teaching us (if we will listen) that these decent and well-meaning Ivy Leaguers will never win the presidency and rebuild the Democratic Party as a national progressive force that will defend and advance the interests of working people. BILL COLLINS

Paris, Ky.

■ Finally someone has given Howard Dean credit for challenging the Clintonistas and their Republican Lite strategy. Populism is still alive and well in the South. Not all of us have joined the country club or bought a Hummer! Growing up in Alabama, studying law in Virginia and practicing in Atlanta have given me about sixty years of Southern thinking. I know there is one way the Democrats can throw out all the progress senators Webb, McCaskill and others have made. That, of course, is to nominate Hillary, who represents all the self-righteousness that will turn off the very voters who came over to the Democrats in 2006. Please give us more from Moser and how we can help Dean defeat the Begalas and Carvilles. MALCOLM SMITH

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EDITORIALS

Home Truths

Congratulations: Children in the United States do not have the worst quality of life in the developed world. That honor is held by Britain—with the United States a close second. America's infant mortality rate is exceeded only by Hungary's; New Zealand is the only country where more people under 19 meet violent deaths each year. On teenage motherhood, we're way ahead: forty-six births for every 1,000 girls between 15 and 19. The closest challenger (New Zealand again) can manage only thirty. Children born in the richest nation on earth are also the most likely to be noticeably poorer than their neighbors: 21.7 percent of America's children live in households whose income is less than half the national median. Britain, at 16.2 percent, comes second in the inequality sweepstakes.

The statistics come from a new Unicef report, *Child Poverty in Perspective: An Overview of Child Well-Being in Rich Countries*, which has been largely ignored in the United States. The report assesses children's lives in twenty-one wealthy nations under a range of headings, from material well-being to family and peer relationships. Like all such studies, this one has its flaws, some of them self-acknowledged. But there is no mistaking the underlying pattern or the weight of suffering and injustice it represents.

The study shows that the two countries with the greatest economic inequality are also failing their children in less tangible ways. British children reported the worst family and peer relationships and the highest incidence overall of risky behavior (smoking, drinking and unprotected sex); American children ranked third from the bottom (above Britain and Poland) in terms of their personal feelings of well-being. Sure, American adolescents drink and smoke less than kids in some other countries. But the cost of the right's attempt to meet teenage sexuality with moralizing and repression rather than education is obvious in the teenage pregnancy rates. The country that came out best overall in the study was the Netherlands, known for its traditions of openness and tolerance.

The areas where American children fare worse than most—infant mortality, low birth weight, early childbearing, family instability and child poverty—are all directly related to the status of women. As Ruth Rosen writes in this issue, American women are still underpaid; still working double shifts; still shouldering on their own the burden of care for children and the elderly; still denied the right to control their fertility; still seen as a "special interest group" rather than half the nation. It is incredible that these things still need saying more than a generation after the rebirth of the women's movement. If the other half can't be made to see that women's rights are vital for the whole community, the effects of gender inequality on children of both sexes might at least offer a compelling argument.

That the two countries deemed to do the least for their own children are those that have led the war in Iraq is obvious. The reasons are less easy to pin down. One can talk about military as opposed to social spending; about pro-business, oil-driven economies; about the distractions of patriotism and the culture of aggression; about valuing the imperatives of power above the duty of care. But however one chooses to name it, the deep, intractable connection between military adventurism abroad and the neglect of needs at home has never been more starkly evident. The pity is that it's so difficult to fight the problem, so hard to focus on a pregnant teenager too scared to ask for help or a child hungry at school when the casualty figures from Baghdad demand our attention. The fog of war may be most blinding for the folks back home.

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COMMENT

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Uneasy Calm in Palestine

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas leader Khaled Meshal went to Mecca after more than 130 people had been killed, hundreds wounded and a burning sense of urgency had taken over the Palestinian streets. Gazans had been confined to their homes for days, this time not as the result of an Israeli curfew or aerial attack but rather from fear of getting caught in the crossfire. Palestinian society, it seemed, was on the brink of civil war.

The pressure from below had an impact, and within two days Fatah and Hamas leaders, through the mediation of Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, succeeded in accomplishing what they had not managed to achieve during the preceding year: a unity government. Thousands of Palestinians spontaneously filled the streets of Gaza to celebrate what seemed to be a historic moment.

As I write, the clashes have indeed subsided, but it is unclear whether the calm will persist. On the one hand, the agreement's fine points have yet to be hammered out, and the devil is often in the details. On the other hand, what lies ahead does not depend solely on goodwill between Fatah and Hamas.

Most pundits have understood the sectarian clashes as either a struggle over who will control the Palestinian government and resources or as a local manifestation of a much broader international conflict between fundamentalist and secular forces in the Islamic world. Such interpretations, however, have obscured the central role Israel and the United States have played.

Even before Hamas won the January 2006 democratic elections, after which the Quartet of Middle East mediators (the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations) cut off aid to the Palestinians, Israel's closure of the territories had triggered an economic crisis. More than 60 percent of the Palestinian inhabitants were living under the international poverty line of $2 a day, with the World Bank reporting that 9 percent of children were suffering from acute malnutrition. Considering that the financial aid provided to the Palestinians had amounted to almost one-third of the per capita gross national income in the territories, the imposition of economic sanctions has been catastrophic.

The closure and sanctions have not only wreaked havoc on the Palestinian economy but have also helped precipitate the violent clashes among the factions. Indeed, the idea behind the sanctions, which both Israel and the United States have pressured other countries to enforce, is to shape power relations within Palestinian society by adopting a scheme that, for clarity's sake, one could call the Somalia Plan.

For months now the Palestinian Authority has been unable to pay the salaries of its 160,000 employees. These workers provide the livelihoods of more than 1 million people—almost a third of the population. Some 70,000 work for the numerous security organizations, most of which are linked to political factions. Like those employed by civil institutions, such as the education and health ministries, they are deeply angry because they cannot feed their families. But unlike the civilian workers, they are armed. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that a power struggle has erupted. Inadequate resources, economic sanctions, thou-

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COMMENT

sands of armed men in distress and foreign support of certain factions are, after all, the ingredients from which warlordism, à la Somalia, is made. Insofar as this is the case, success of the unity government is contingent on ending the economic sanctions.

But here comes the snag: Israel's unilateralist government is not really interested in a negotiating partner and sees Palestinian unity as a threat. Even before the Palestinian leaders returned home, Israel launched a well-orchestrated diplomatic campaign to persuade the Quartet to uphold sanctions. Simultaneously, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert declared that any future negotiations would be informed by a "three no" approach: no to dividing Jerusalem, no to a withdrawal to the 1967 borders and no to a solution to the Palestinian refugee problem. Thus, Israel is unwilling to discuss any of the contentious issues that need to be resolved.

The unfolding events also set the stage for making the February 19 Jerusalem summit inconsequential. Nonetheless, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice did make some significant statements during her Middle East visit. It is unlikely that a Palestinian state will be created before President Bush ends his term, she told the Palestinian newspaper *Al Ayam*. And to the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* she added that the Palestinian unity government will not be recognized—suggesting that sanctions would continue—until it abides by Israel's three conditions: that the Palestinian government recognize Israel, renounce violence and ratify the Oslo agreements and the road map. While these demands are in many respects legitimate, they could readily be part of negotiations rather than a weapon used to precipitate internal violence and thus destroy Palestinian society.

Ironically, Israel's position is inimical to its own interests. If the internal Palestinian clashes resume and develop into a full-blown civil war, there will be no hope of resolving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. One has to be extremely shortsighted not to see how the absence of a united Palestinian leadership will undermine all efforts to bring about local and regional peace.

NEVE GORDON

Neve Gordon teaches politics at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel.

Bloggers on the Trail

Bill Donohue is not known for respectful rhetoric. As president of the Catholic League, Donohue has complained that "Hollywood likes anal sex," "Hollywood is controlled by secular Jews who hate Christianity," John Kerry is an "idiot" and Catholics "cooperate in evil" by voting for him. Yet it is Bill Donohue who led the first politically correct purge of the 2008 presidential campaign.

It all started when John Edwards hired two Internet staffers who write for the liberal blogs Pandagon and Shakespeare's Sister. They had previously written entries mocking religion, using obscenities and slamming George W. Bush's "Christofascist base." Citing eight entries, Donohue assailed them as "anti-Catholic vulgar trash-talking bigots" and demanded they be fired, in a strident press release covered by the *New York Times*. Liberal bloggers fought back, pressing the campaign to defend its own team against politically motivated attacks from one hypocritical opponent. Edwards said he would keep the staffers, who expressed regret at causing offense; the blogosphere rejoiced and Donohue sulked. The skirmish could have ended there. But it did not, largely because the bloggers kept blogging and Donohue kept attacking.

The following weekend one of the Edwards staffers, Amanda Marcotte, wrote a personal blog entry referring to sexist depictions of Jesus' birth. Donohue pounced, and after another media circus, both staffers voluntarily resigned. Marcotte says the entry was a "naïve mistake" that gave ammunition to Edwards's detractors, but she was new to "bullet dodging in politics."

So the flap is over, for now, and everyone is trying to make sense of what happened. There is a big risk of drawing the wrong conclusions.

The fight was not so much about religion or online obscenity as power. The netroots are the most aggressive, ascendant force in progressive politics, wielding more members, money and media impact than most liberal organizations. In the 2006 election cycle, MoveOn alone spent more than every other liberal political action committee except the prochoice EMILY's List. According to the Institute for Politics, Democracy and the Internet, online donors gave Kerry $82 million in 2004, and Democrats expect much more in 2008. (Bush pulled only $14 million from the web.) And now top bloggers—like Jerome Armstrong, Markos Moulitsas and Glenn Greenwald—have hundreds of thousands of readers, successful books and a bully pulpit in print and broadcast media.

Republicans cannot stop the donations or pressure the media into ignoring liberal bloggers. Instead, the GOP has tried to drive a wedge between Democratic leaders and the netroots by attacking bloggers—and their readers—as an extreme vitriolic embarrassment. During the midterms, the Republican National Committee repeatedly attacked Democratic candidates for accepting netroots donations and working with bloggers, even distributing a six-page "research" brief maligning Moulitsas, the founder of Daily Kos. Conservative operatives recently floated smears of anti-Semitism at MoveOn [see Eric Alterman, "No Comment," October 30, 2006], Republican donor Bob Perry sank $1 million into a new group devoted to battling MoveOn and Bill O'Reilly regularly denounces the "far left websites." The strategy is to scare Democratic politicians away from tapping their motivated base.

Some Democrats are falling into the trap. Reviewing the Edwards affair, a former aide to Joe Lieberman advised the party to refuse bloggers access and "deny them jobs that confer party approval." Somewhere, Bill Donohue was smiling. As it turned out, the netroots were not upset with Edwards, but plenty of Democrats were upset with the netroots.

Of course, the staffers' blog entries were uncivil. Donohue used them precisely because they were offensive to disinterested people. But the same goes for Donohue's past slurs, or Vice President Cheney dropping f-bombs on the Senate floor. Political debates are fierce, online and off.

"On our blogs, we all say things that might offend someone. Truth is, in life—in bars, in restaurants, in offices, on the phone—we all do that, only now there is...a permanent record," wrote Jeff

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COMMENT

Jarvis, director of CUNY's interactive journalism program, about the Edwards affair. When campaigns hire bloggers, he explained, they empower people who talk "without the veils of spin and PR and plastic discretion that politicians must learn." Yet the very skills that make a good blogger—provoking people with passionate, authentic opinions—are considered a handicap on the campaign trail. John Edwards took a bold step by hiring and standing by two liberal feminist firebrands, but he was not prepared for their written words to compete with his campaign message.

The best political blogs thrive on a discourse built in opposition to the mainstream; people gather to commune in ways not permitted by media and political gatekeepers. The vigorous dialogue is probably closer to voters' real conversations than politicians' sanitized talking points or the breathless speculation that passes for news today, from premature presidential polls to Anna Nicole Smith's death. In the end, campaigns prefer discipline over authenticity, and many bloggers do not. So Democrats should focus on tapping bloggers' energy while managing their passion—and disregard the self-serving complaints of their opponents.

ARI MELBER

Ari Melber is a regular contributor to www.thenation.com.

Lincoln's Antiwar Record

An old marketing adage states that no product exists whose sales cannot be improved by associating it with Abraham Lincoln. The same seems to be true in politics. As Congress debated resolutions condemning the escalation of the Iraq War, the remaining supporters of George W. Bush's Iraq policy invoked Lincoln to tar the war's opponents with the brush of treason. But this reflects a complete misunderstanding of Lincoln's record.

The latest example of the misuse of Lincoln came in a February 13 article in the *Washington Times* by conservative writer Frank Gaffney. Gaffney quoted Lincoln as declaring that wartime Congressmen who "damage morale and undermine the military" should be "exiled or hanged." Glenn Greenwald, on *Salon*, quickly pointed out that the "quote," which has circulated for the past few years in conservative circles, is a fabrication. (Conservative use of invented Lincoln statements is nothing new—Ronald Reagan used a series of them in a speech to the 1992 Republican National Convention. But today, when Lincoln's entire works are online and easily searchable, there is no possible excuse for invoking fraudulent quotations.)

Greenwald did not point out that Lincoln's record as a member of Congress during the Mexican War utterly refutes the conservative effort to appropriate his legacy. Lincoln was elected to the House of Representatives in 1846, shortly after President James Polk invaded Mexico when that country refused his demand to sell California to the United States. Polk falsely claimed that he was responding to a Mexican invasion.

Shortly before Lincoln's term in Congress began, he attended a speech in Lexington, Kentucky, by his political idol Senator Henry Clay. "This is no war of defense," Clay declared in a blistering attack on Polk, "but one of unnecessary and offensive aggression." A month later, Lincoln introduced a set of resolutions challenging Polk's contention that Mexico had shed American blood on American soil and voted for a statement, approved by the House, that declared the war "unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President."

Clay and Lincoln objected as strenuously as any member of Congress today to a war launched by a President on fabricated grounds. When Lincoln's law partner, William Herndon, defended the President's right to invade another country if he considered it threatening, Lincoln sent a devastating reply. Herndon, he claimed, would allow a President "to make war at pleasure. Study to see if you can fix *any limit* to his power in this respect.... If, to-day, he should choose to say he thinks it necessary to invade Canada, to prevent the British from invading us, how could you stop him?" The Constitution, he went on, gave the "war-making power" to Congress precisely to prevent Presidents from starting wars while "pretending...that the good of the people was the object."

Like Bush, Lincoln spoke of the United States as a beacon of liberty, an example to the world of the virtues of democracy. But he rejected the idea of American aggression in the name of freedom. He included in an 1859 speech a biting satire of "Young America," a group of writers and politicians who glorified territorial aggrandizement. Young America, he remarked, "owns a large part of the world, by right of possessing it; and all the rest by right of *wanting* it, and *intending* to have it.... He is a great friend of humanity; and his desire for land is not selfish, but merely an impulse to extend the area of freedom. He is very anxious to fight for the liberation of enslaved nations and colonies, provided, always, they *have* land." Substitute "oil" for "land" and the statement seems eerily relevant in the early twenty-first century.

Conservatives should think twice before invoking Lincoln's words, real or invented, in the cause of the Iraq War and before equating condemnations of Bush's policies and usurpations with treason.

ERIC FONER

Eric Foner, a member of the Nation *editorial board, is DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University.*

CALVIN TRILLIN

A REPUBLICAN TALKS STRAIGHT TO AN ANTI-SURGE DEMOCRAT

You people don't support the troops.
Your patriotism's not instilled.
The way we must support the troops
Is send more over to be killed.

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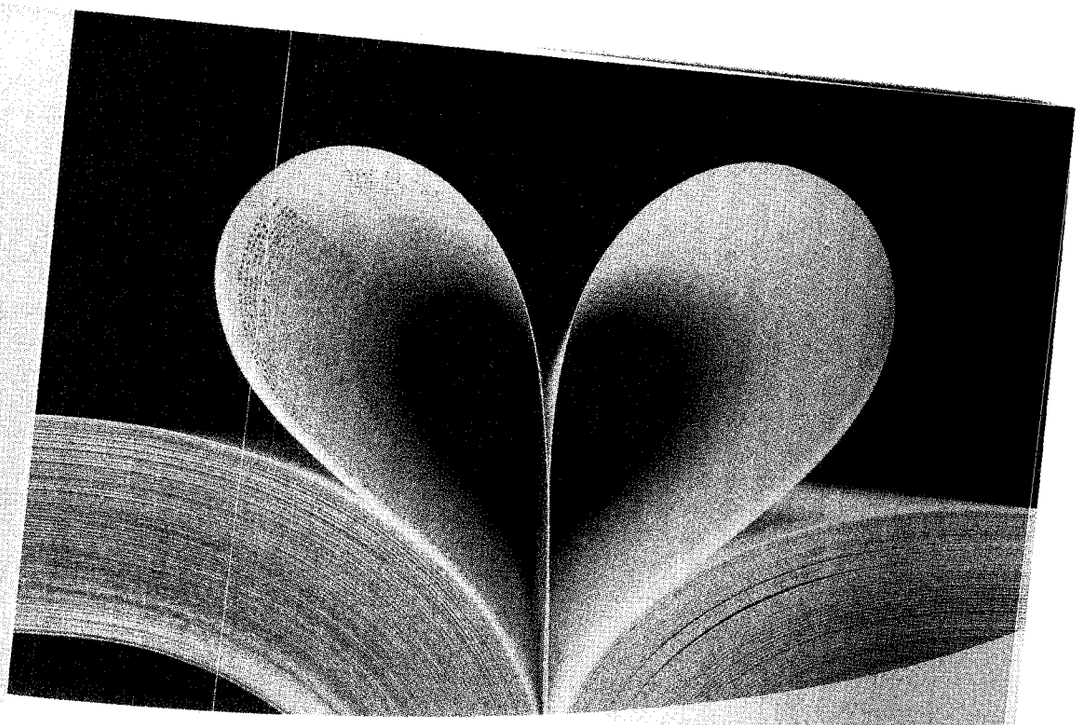

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ERIC ALTERMAN

Liberalism's Lost Libretto

The significance of the Lincoln Center Theater's production of Tom Stoppard's three-part, nearly eight-hour *The Coast of Utopia* lies in its status as a cultural rather than a literary event. As a dramatic work the play, which follows the lives of a series of Russian intellectuals and would-be revolutionaries across Europe between 1833 and 1866, suffers from all kinds of insoluble problems. For starters, even if you've done all your homework—including the extra credit—it's damn near impossible to remember who everybody is, what they thought and with whom they slept, and why it might matter seven hours (and possibly months) later. But as an occasion for serious political and philosophical argument in a culture bereft of both, Stoppard's magnum opus is cause for celebration.

Utopia resists simple summary. It begins in the years following the crushing of the Decembrist revolt of 1825, as Stoppard's young idealists muse about the backward nature of their nation and the beautiful future they would create if only they weren't saddled with institutions like the czar, serfdom, censorship and the Third Section, the KGB's pre-Revolution precursor. In doing so, they use and abuse the arguments of various German Romanticists, French proto-socialists and even the odd novelist. An enormous Ginger Cat, representing the dialectic of history passing from Hegel to Marx to Engels, has a walk-on, too.

Eventually, as the action moves from the splendor of the Bakunin family estate in Premukhino with its "500 souls" to Moscow to Paris to Rome to Nice to London and, finally, to Geneva, the arguments focus on the various disagreements between Michael Bakunin—known to most of us as one of the philosophical fathers of anarchism but who here spouts an extremely confused and romantic Hegelianism—and Alexander Herzen, who remains today the hero of Russian constitutional liberals and who ought to be a hero to liberals everywhere.

Stoppard naturally spends a lot of time on Herzen's many personal tribulations—the illegitimate son of a Russian aristocrat, he spent most of his life in extremely comfortable exile, writing and publishing up a storm while being visited by countless personal tragedies and romantic complications.

In a recent public conversation I attended, Stoppard allowed that Ethan Hawke, who plays Bakunin, complained to the playwright that it would be pleasant if, just once, his character could win an argument with Herzen. Stoppard gave in, but not, I think, for sound political or philosophical reasons. As he noted in the discussion, "There is no cohesion, no structure to Bakunin's various positions." Bakunin himself wrote in his 1851 *Confession*, a "radical defect in my nature" has always been "a love for the fantastic, for unusual, unheard-of adventures which open up vast horizons and the end of which cannot be foreseen." This makes for an exciting character—with which Hawke does wonders—but it is rather an unfortunate quality in a revolutionary leader predisposed to violent changes of mind.

Bakunin was certainly an entertaining fellow, and his writings derive great power from their deceptive clarity. But as the great Isaiah Berlin observed, Bakunin's "path was strewn with victims, casualties, and faithful, idealistic converts. He himself remained a gay, easygoing, mendacious, irresistibly agreeable, calmly and coldly destructive, fascinating, generous, undisciplined, eccentric Russian landowner to the end."

Herzen's primary contributions to history are two. First, ironically, was his work as a journalist: During his years in London, he and Nicholas Ogarev published *The Bell*, a newspaper for the Russian intelligentsia. In addition to its exile readership, it was smuggled into Russia, where it was read by friend and foe alike and is credited by many historians with playing a role in convincing Czar Alexander II to free the serfs in 1861. Dwight Macdonald called *The Bell* "perhaps the most effective muckraking magazine in radical history."

Second, and no less significant, Herzen held open the possibility of a liberal evolution rather than a violent revolution for Russia and for all the world's downtrodden. Stoppard's Herzen calls the Communist and nihilist "new men" of Russia "the syphilis of our revolutionary lust," and a better metaphor for Bolshevism would be hard even to imagine. Herzen put his finger on something profound and wonderful when, observing how respectfully British policemen treated the indigent—while allowing them to remain absolutely destitute—he mused of his English hosts, "They invented personal liberty and did it without having any theories about it."

Ultimately, what I found most admirable about Stoppard's Herzen was his consistent commitment to moderation while surrounded by revolutionary hotheads. For all his intellectual arrogance, he knew how much he didn't know; how much was, indeed, unknowable. "History has no libretto," Stoppard said when I asked him about the relationship between his politics and his plays. "The only gatekeeper is chance."

Sitting in the theater over those eight hours, I could not help thinking about the arrogance of our own punditocracy and particularly the liberal hawks, who were so sure of themselves as they predicted the outcome of the American invasion of Iraq. Like Bakunin, they lurched from theory to theory to justify their desire, the only consistency being that each new idea relied on what they imagined to be the cleansing effect of massive violence.

Iraq was not "liberated" or "democratized." The Arab world was not "moderated." Israel was not made more "secure." Utopia, in other words, is a state that exists only in the minds of romantic intellectuals with little or no knowledge of the cultures they expect to transform. Better to keep them onstage in Stoppard's brilliant, if flawed, production than on the stage of history, helping politicians justify the destruction of functioning societies on behalf of theories that would require another century in the oven merely to reach the status of half-baked.

Herzen would likely have warned us of their folly; Bakunin would have led the charge. ■

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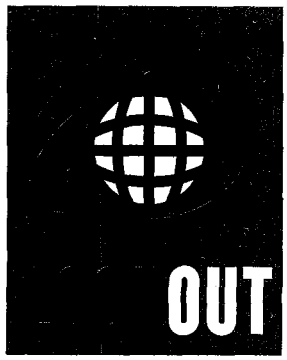
NAOMI KLEIN

A Trial for Thousands Denied Trial



Something remarkable is going on in a Miami courtroom. The cruel methods US interrogators have used since September 11 to "break" prisoners are finally being put on trial.

This was not supposed to happen. The Bush Administration's plan was to put José Padilla on trial for allegedly being part of a network linked to international terrorists. But Padilla's lawyers are arguing that he is not fit to stand trial because he has been driven insane by the government.

Arrested in May 2002 at Chicago's O'Hare airport, Padilla, a Brooklyn-born former gang member, was classified as an "enemy combatant" and taken to a Navy prison in Charleston, South Carolina. He was kept in a 9-by-7-foot cell with no natural light, no clock and no calendar. Whenever Padilla left the cell, he was shackled and suited in heavy goggles and headphones. Padilla was kept under these conditions for 1,307 days. He was forbidden contact with anyone but his interrogators, who punctured the extreme sensory deprivation with sensory overload, blasting him with harsh lights and pounding sounds. Padilla also says he was injected with a "truth serum," a substance his lawyers believe was LSD or PCP.

According to his lawyers and two mental health specialists who examined him, Padilla has been so shattered that he lacks the ability to assist in his own defense. He is convinced that his lawyers are "part of a continuing interrogation program" and sees his captors as protectors. In order to prove that "the extended torture visited upon Mr. Padilla has left him damaged," his lawyers want to tell the court what happened during those years in the Navy brig. The prosecution strenuously objects, maintaining that "Padilla is competent," that his treatment is irrelevant.

US District Judge Marcia Cooke disagrees. "It's not like Mr. Padilla was living in a box. He was at a place. Things happened to him at that place." The judge has ordered several prison employees to testify at the hearings on Padilla's mental state, which begin February 22. They will be asked how a man alleged to have engaged in elaborate antigovernment plots now acts, in the words of brig staff, "like a piece of furniture."

It's difficult to overstate the significance of these hearings. The techniques used to break Padilla have been standard operating procedure at Guantánamo Bay since the first prisoners arrived five years ago. They wore blackout goggles and sound-blocking headphones and were placed in extended isolation, interrupted by strobe lights and heavy metal music. These same practices have been documented in dozens of cases of CIA "extraordinary rendition" as well as in prisons in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many have suffered the same symptoms as Padilla. According to James Yee, former Army Muslim chaplain at Guantánamo, there is an entire section of the prison called Delta Block for detainees who have been reduced to a delusional state. "They would respond to me in a childlike voice, talking complete nonsense. Many of them would loudly sing childish songs, repeating the song over and over." All of Delta Block was on twenty-four-hour suicide watch.

Human Rights Watch has exposed a US-run detention facility near Kabul known as the "prison of darkness"—tiny pitch-black cells, strange blaring sounds. "Plenty lost their minds," one former inmate recalled. "I could hear people knocking their heads against the walls and the doors."

These standard mind-breaking techniques have never faced scrutiny in a US court because the prisoners in the jails are foreigners and have been stripped of the right of habeas corpus—a denial that, scandalously, was just upheld by a federal appeals court in Washington, DC. There is only one reason Padilla's case is different: He is a US citizen. The Administration did not originally intend to bring Padilla to trial, but when his status as an enemy combatant faced a Supreme Court challenge, the Administration abruptly changed course, charging Padilla and transferring him to civilian custody. That makes Padilla's case unique: He is the only victim of the post-9/11 legal netherworld to face an ordinary US trial.

Now that Padilla's mental state is the central issue in the case, the government prosecutors have a problem. The CIA and the military have known since the early 1960s that extreme sensory deprivation and sensory overload cause personality disintegration—that's the whole point. "The deprivation of stimuli induces regression by depriving the subject's mind of contact with an outer world and thus forcing it in upon itself. At the same time, the calculated provision of stimuli during interrogation tends to make the regressed subject view the interrogator as a father-figure." That comes from *Kubark Counterintelligence Interrogation*, a 1963 declassified CIA manual for interrogating "resistant sources."

The manual was based on the findings of the agency's notorious MK Ultra program, which in the 1950s funneled about $25 million to scientists to research "unusual techniques of interrogation." One of the psychiatrists who received CIA funding was the infamous Ewen Cameron of Montreal's McGill University. Cameron subjected hundreds of psychiatric patients to large doses of electroshock and total sensory isolation and drugged them with LSD and PCP. In 1960 Cameron gave a lecture at the Brooks Airforce Base in Texas in which he stated that sensory deprivation "produces the primary symptoms of schizophrenia."

There is no need to go so far back to prove that the US military knew full well that it was driving Padilla mad. The Army's field manual, reissued just last year, states, "Sensory deprivation may result in extreme anxiety, hallucinations, bizarre thoughts, depression, and anti-social behavior," as well as "significant psychological distress."

If these techniques drove Padilla insane, that means the US government has been deliberately driving hundreds, possibly thousands, of prisoners insane around the world. What is on trial in Florida is not one man's mental state. It is the whole system of US psychological torture. ■

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ARTICLES

THE CARE CRISIS

HOW WOMEN ARE BEARING THE BURDEN OF A NATIONAL EMERGENCY

by RUTH ROSEN

A baby is born. A child develops a high fever. A spouse breaks a leg. A parent suffers a stroke. These are the events that throw a working woman's delicate balance between work and family into chaos.

Although we read endless stories and reports about the problems faced by working women, we possess inadequate language for what most people view as a private rather than a political problem. "That's life," we tell each other, instead of trying to forge common solutions to these dilemmas.

That's exactly what housewives used to say when they felt unhappy and unfulfilled in the 1950s: "That's life." Although magazines often referred to housewives' unexplained depressions, it took Betty Friedan's 1963 bestseller to turn "the problem that has no name" into a household phrase, "the feminine mystique"—the belief that a woman should find identity and fulfillment exclusively through her family and home.

The great accomplishment of the modern women's movement was to name such private experiences—domestic violence, sexual harassment, economic discrimination, date rape—and turn them into public problems that could be debated, changed by new laws and policies or altered by social customs. That is how the personal became political.

Although we have shelves full of books that address work/family problems, we still have not named the burdens that affect most of America's working families.

Call it the care crisis.

For four decades, American women have entered the paid workforce—on men's terms, not their own—yet we have done precious little as a society to restructure the workplace or family life. The consequence of this "stalled revolution," a term coined by sociologist Arlie Hochschild, is a profound "care deficit." A broken healthcare system, which has left 47 million Americans without health coverage, means this care crisis is often a matter of life and death. Today the care crisis has replaced the feminine mystique as women's "problem that has no name." It is the elephant in the room—at home, at work and in national politics—gigantic but ignored.

Three decades after Congress passed comprehensive childcare legislation in 1971—Nixon vetoed it—childcare has simply dropped off the national agenda. And in the intervening years, the political atmosphere has only grown more hostile to the idea of using federal funds to subsidize the lives of working families.

The result? People suffer their private crises alone, without realizing that the care crisis is a problem of national significance. Many young women agonize about how to combine work and family but view the question of how to raise children as a personal dilemma, to which they need to find an individual solution. Most cannot imagine turning it into a political debate. More than a few young women have told me that the lack of affordable childcare has made them reconsider plans to become parents. Annie Tummino, a young feminist active in New York, put it this way: "I feel terrified of the patchwork situation women are forced to rely upon. Many young women are deciding not to have children or waiting until they are well established in their careers."

Now that the Democrats are running both houses of Congress, we finally have an opportunity to expose the right's cynical appropriation of "family values" by creating real solutions to the care crisis and making them central to the Democratic agenda. The obstacles, of course, are formidable, given that government and businesses—as well as many men—have found it profitable and convenient for women to shoulder the burden of housework and caregiving.

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It is as though Americans are trapped in a time warp, still convinced that women should and will care for children, the elderly, homes and communities. But of course they can't, now that most women have entered the workforce. In 1950 less than a fifth of mothers with children under age 6 worked in the labor force. By 2000 two-thirds of these mothers worked in the paid labor market.

Men in dual-income couples have increased their participation in household chores and childcare. But women still manage and organize much of family life, returning home after work to a "second shift" of housework and childcare—often compounded by a "third shift," caring for aging parents.

Conservatives typically blame the care crisis on the women's movement for creating the impossible ideal of "having it all." But it was women's magazines and popular writers, not feminists, who created the myth of the Superwoman. Feminists of the 1960s and '70s knew they couldn't do it alone. In fact, they insisted that men share the housework and child-rearing and that government and business subsidize childcare.

America's working women feel burdened and exhausted, desperate for sleep, but they have made few collective protests.

A few decades later, America's working women feel burdened and exhausted, desperate for sleep and leisure, but they have made few collective protests for government-funded childcare or family-friendly workplace policies. As American corporations compete for profits through layoffs and outsourcing, most workers hesitate to make waves for fear of losing their jobs.

Single mothers naturally suffer the most from the care crisis. But even families with two working parents face what Hochschild has called a "time bind." Americans' yearly work hours increased by more than three weeks between 1989 and 1996, leaving no time for a balanced life. Parents become overwhelmed and cranky, gulping antacids and sleeping pills, while children feel neglected and volunteerism in community life declines.

Meanwhile, the right wins the rhetorical battle by stressing "values" and "faith." In the name of the family they campaign to ban gay marriage and save unborn children. Yet they refuse to embrace public policies that could actually help working families regain stability and balance.

For the very wealthy, the care crisis is not so dire. They solve their care deficit by hiring full-time nannies or home-care attendants, often from developing countries, to care for their children or parents. The irony is that even as these immigrant women make it easier for well-off Americans to ease their own care burdens, their long hours of paid caregiving often force them to leave their own children with relatives in other countries. They also suffer from extremely low wages, job insecurity and employer exploitation.

Middle- and working-class families, with fewer resources, try to patch together care for their children and aging parents with relatives and baby sitters. The very poor sometimes gain access to federal or state programs for childcare or eldercare; but women who work in the low-wage service sector, without adequate sick leave, generally lose their jobs when children or parents require urgent attention. As of 2005, 21 million women lived below the poverty line—many of them mothers working in these vulnerable situations.

The care crisis starkly exposes how much of the feminist agenda of gender equality remains woefully unfinished. True, some businesses have taken steps to ease the care burden. Every year, *Working Mother* publishes a list of the 100 most "family friendly" companies. In 2000 the magazine reported that companies that had made "significant improvements in 'quality of life' benefits such as telecommuting, onsite childcare, career training, and flextime" were "saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in recruitment in the long run."

Some universities, law firms and hospitals have also made career adjustments for working mothers, but women's career demands still tend to collide with their most intensive child-rearing years. Many women end up feeling they have failed rather than struggled against a setup designed for a male worker with few family responsibilities.

The fact is, market fundamentalism—the irrational belief that markets solve all problems—has succeeded in dismantling federal regulations and services but has failed to answer the question, Who will care for America's children and elderly?

As a result, this country's family policies lag far behind those of the rest of the world. A just-released study by researchers at Harvard and McGill found that of 173 countries studied, 168 guarantee paid maternal leave—with the United States joining Lesotho and Swaziland among the laggards. At least 145 countries mandate paid sick days for short- or long-term illnesses—but not the United States. One hundred thirty-four countries legislate a maximum length for the workweek; not us.

The media constantly reinforce the conventional wisdom that the care crisis is an individual problem. Books, magazines and newspapers offer American women an endless stream of advice about how to maintain their "balancing act," how to be better organized and more efficient or how to meditate, exercise and pamper themselves to relieve their mounting stress. Missing is the very pragmatic proposal that American society needs new policies that will restructure the workplace and reorganize family life.

Another slew of stories insist that there simply is no problem: Women have gained equality and passed into a postfeminist era. Such claims are hardly new. Ever since 1970 the mainstream media have been pronouncing the death of feminism and reporting that working women have returned home to care for their children. Now such stories describe, based on scraps of anecdotal data, how elite (predominantly white) women are "choosing" to "opt out," ditching their career opportunities in favor of home and children or to care for aging parents. In 2000 Ellen Galinsky, president of the Families and Work Institute in New York, wearily responded to reporters, "I still meet people all the time who believe that the trend has turned, that more women are staying home with their kids, that there are going to be fewer dual-income families. But it's just not true."

Ruth Rosen, a historian, journalist and senior fellow at the Longview Institute, teaches history and public policy at the University of California, Berkeley. This article was adapted from the epilogue to a new edition of The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America.

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Such contentious stories conveniently mask the reality that most women have to work, regardless of their preference. They also obscure the fact that an absence of quality, affordable childcare and flexible working hours, among other family-friendly policies, greatly contributes to women's so-called "choice" to stay at home.

In the past few years, a series of sensational stories have pitted stay-at-home mothers against "working women" in what the media coyly call the "mommy wars." When the *New York Times* ran a story on the controversy, one woman wrote the editor, "The word 'choice' has been used...as a euphemism for unpaid labor, with no job security, no health or vacation benefits and no retirement plans. No wonder men are not clamoring for this 'choice.' Many jobs in the workplace also involve drudgery, but do not leave one financially dependent on another person."

Most institutions, in fact, have not implemented policies that support family life. As a result, many women do feel compelled to choose between work and family. In Scandinavian countries, where laws provide for generous parental leave and subsidized childcare, women participate in the labor force at far greater rates than here—evidence that "opting out" is, more often than not, the result of a poverty of acceptable options.

Most institutions do not support family life. 'Opting out' is, more often than not, the result of a poverty of acceptable options.

American women who do leave their jobs find that they cannot easily re-enter the labor force. The European Union has established that parents who take a leave from work have a right to return to an equivalent job. Not so in the United States. According to a 2005 study by the Wharton Center for Leadership and Change and the Forte Foundation, those who held advanced degrees in law, medicine or education often faced a frosty reception and found themselves shut out of their careers. In her 2005 book *Bait and Switch*, Barbara Ehrenreich describes how difficult it was for her to find employment as a midlevel manager, despite waving an excellent résumé at potential employers. "The prohibition on [résumé] gaps is pretty great," she says. "You have to be getting an education or making money for somebody all along, every minute."

Some legislation passed by Congress has exacerbated the care crisis rather than ameliorated it. Consider the 1996 Welfare Reform Act, which eliminated guaranteed welfare, replaced it with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and set a five-year lifetime limit on benefits. Administered by the states, TANF aimed to reduce the number of mothers on welfare rolls, not to reduce poverty.

TANF was supposed to provide self-sufficiency for poor women. But most states forced recipients into unskilled, low-wage jobs, where they joined the working poor. By 2002 one in ten former welfare recipients in seven Midwestern states had become homeless, even though they were now employed.

TANF also disqualified higher education as a work-related activity, which robbed many poor women of an opportunity for upward mobility. Even as the media celebrate highly educated career women who leave their jobs to become stay-at-home moms, TANF requires single mothers to leave their children somewhere, anywhere, so they can fulfill their workfare requirement and receive benefits. TANF issues vouchers that force women to leave their children with dubious childcare providers or baby sitters they have good reasons not to trust.

Some readers may recall the 1970 Women's Strike for Equality, when up to 50,000 women exuberantly marched down New York's Fifth Avenue to issue three core demands for improving their lives: the right to an abortion, equal pay for equal work and universal childcare. The event received so much media attention that it turned the women's movement into a household word.

A generation later, women activists know how far we are from achieving those goals. Abortion is under serious legal attack, and one-third of American women no longer have access to a provider in the county in which they live. Women still make only 77 percent of what men do for the same job; and after they have a child, they suffer from an additional "mother's wage gap," which shows up in fewer promotions, smaller pensions and lower Social Security benefits. Universal childcare isn't even on the agenda of the Democrats.

Goals proposed in 1970, however unrealized, are no longer sufficient for the new century. Even during these bleak Bush years, many writers, activists and organizations have begun planning for a different future. If women really mattered, they ask, how would we change public policy and society? As one writer puts it, "What would the brave new world look like if women could press reboot and rewrite all the rules?"

Though no widely accepted manifesto exists, many advocacy organizations—such as the Institute for Women's Policy Research, the Children's Defense Fund, the National Partnership for Women and Families, Take Care Net and MomsRising—have argued that universal healthcare, paid parental leave, high-quality subsidized on-the-job and community childcare, a living wage, job training and education, flexible work hours and greater opportunities for part-time work, investment in affordable housing and mass transit, and the reinstatement of a progressive tax structure would go a long way toward supporting working mothers and their families. (In these pages in 2003, Deborah Stone documented campaigns on many of these issues by organizations in California, Massachusetts and Washington.)

Democrats don't need to reinvent the wheel; these groups have already provided the basis for a new progressive domestic agenda. And if Democrats embrace large portions of this program, they might attract enough women to widen the gender gap in voting, which shrank from 14 percent in 1996 to only 7 percent in 2004.

This is an expensive agenda, but the money is there if we end tax cuts for the wealthy and reduce expenditures for unnecessary wars, space-based weapons and the hundreds of American bases that circle the globe. If we also reinstate a progressive tax structure, this wealthy nation would have enough resources to care for all its citizens. It's a question of political will.

Confronting the care crisis and reinvigorating the struggle for gender equality should be central to the broad progressive effort to restore belief in the "common good." Although Americans

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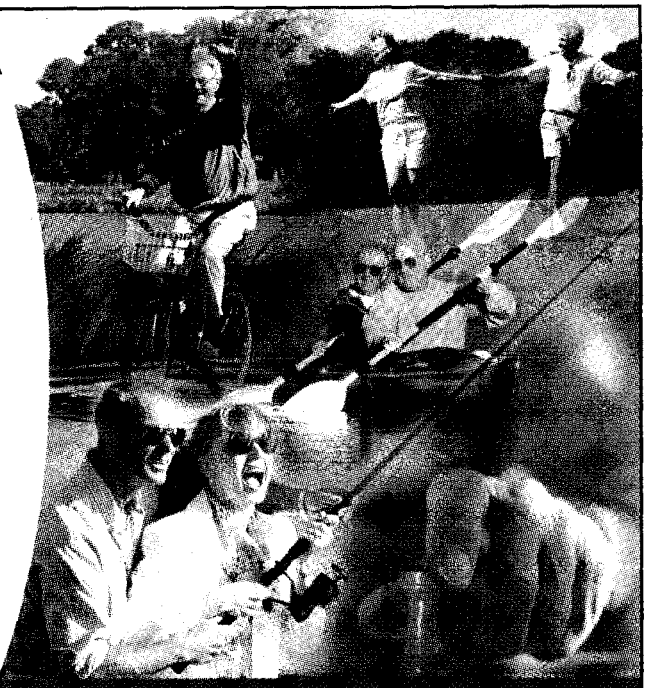

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famously root for the underdog, they have shown far less compassion for the poor, the vulnerable and the homeless in recent years. Social conservatives, moreover, have persuaded many Americans that they—and not liberals—are the ones who embody morality, that an activist government is the problem rather than the solution and that good people don't ask for help.

The problem is that many Democrats, along with prominent liberal men in the media, don't view women's lives as part of the common good. Consciously or unconsciously, they have dismissed women as an "interest group" and treated women's struggle for equality as "identity politics" rather than part of a common national project. Last April Michael Tomasky, then editor of *The American Prospect*, penned an essay on the "common good" that is typical of such manifestoes. It never once addressed any aspect of the care crisis. Such writers don't seem to grasp that a campaign to end the care crisis could mobilize massive support for this idea of the common good, because it affects almost all working families.

Now that Democrats are emerging from the wilderness, there are scattered indications they are willing to use their power to address the mounting care crisis. The Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, one of the largest caucuses, has access to Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who has supported previous efforts to address the care crisis. The Senate has just created a new Caucus on Children, Work and Family, a sign, says Valerie Young, a lobbyist with the National Association of Mothers' Centers, that "this is no longer a personal problem—it's a national problem." Connecticut Senator Chris Dodd says he will introduce legislation that would provide paid leave for workers who need to care for sick family members, newborns or newly adopted children. Senator Pat Roberts of Kansas has just introduced the Small Business Child Care Act, which would help employers provide childcare for their workers. Members in both houses of Congress are reopening the discussion of universal healthcare reform.

The truth is, we're living with the legacy of an unfinished gender revolution. Real equality for women, who increasingly work outside the home, requires that liberals place the care crisis at the core of their agenda and take back "family values" from the right. So far, no presidential candidate has made the care crisis a significant part of his or her political agenda. So it's up to us, the millions of Americans who experience the care crisis every day, to take every opportunity—through electoral campaigns and grassroots activism—to turn "the problem that has no name" into a household word. ■

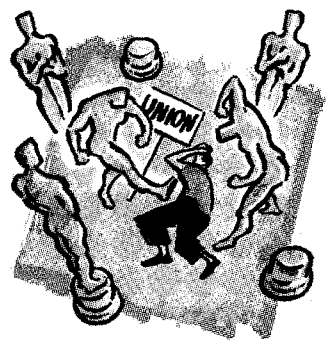
WHY IS THE WORKING CLASS INVISIBLE IN MOVIES COMING OUT OF HOLLYWOOD TODAY?

Remembering Norma Rae

ROBERT NATHAN AND JO-ANN MORT

Here are some words you are unlikely to hear in any of the movie clips shown during the Academy Awards this year:

> Ladies and gentlemen, the textile industry, in which you are spending your lives and your substance...is the only industry in the whole length and breadth of these United States of America that is not unionized. Therefore, they are free to exploit you, to lie to you, to cheat you and to take away from you what is rightfully yours—your health, a decent wage, a fit place to work.



CHRISTOPHER SERRA

"Unionized" isn't a word you hear in many American movies. "A decent wage," now there's a phrase that doesn't crop up too often. As for the evocative "your lives and your substance," poetic descriptions of the human condition aren't generally found in contemporary entertainment.

This speech is from Martin Ritt's classic 1979 film *Norma Rae*, delivered in an impassioned sermon by Ron Leibman in the role of an organizer for the Textile Workers Union of America, a real union at the time and a predecessor to the current trade union UNITE HERE. *Norma Rae* is an aberration in recent Hollywood history. The movie portrays a realistic union-organizing campaign and the fierce corporate response at the fictional O.P. Henley textile mill in the fictional town of Henleyville. As everyone knew at the time, the mill and the town were unambiguous stand-ins for J.P. Stevens and its sixteen-year war against union organizers in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, and the movie accurately depicted the state of American labor in 1979.

The situation has not improved much since. The only remaining Stevens factory in the United States (owned by its successor company, Westpoint Home) is a unionized blanket mill in Maine. In other industries, union organizers are battling adversaries as unyielding as any in the days of *Norma Rae*. According to the labor advocacy group American Rights at Work, last year more than 23,000 Americans were fired or penalized for legal union activity.

On a human level, *Norma Rae* is the story of one woman, played by Sally Field, who finds redemption risking her life for economic justice, and of factory workers demanding to be treated as more than slaves. In the realm of the political, it is virtually the only American movie of the modern era to deal substantially with any of these subjects. Even today it remains iconic—a major studio movie about the lives of working people with a profound

Robert Nathan, co-executive producer of the television series Law & Order, *is a member of the Writers Guild of America. Jo-Ann Mort, CEO of ChangeCommunications LLC, was director of communications for ACTWU and UNITE, predecessor unions to UNITE HERE.*

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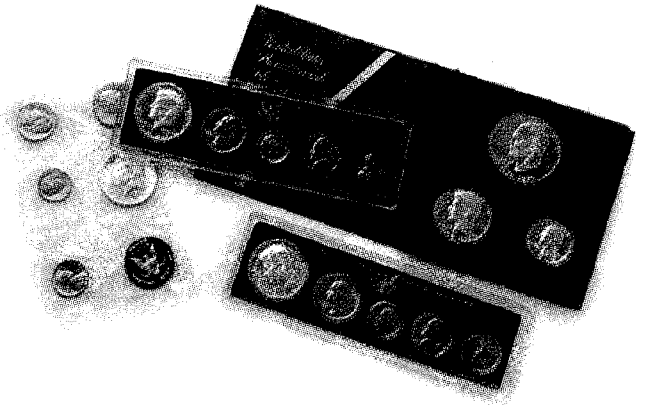

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and, for its time, disturbing political message: The little guy may have a prayer of getting social justice, but he'll have to fight desperately to get it. Try to think of a contemporary American film with a similar message or a political statement anywhere near that blunt. The closest thing to a message in this year's crop of Oscar nominees for Best Picture can be found in *Babel*, which poses the rather mild question, Why can't we all just get along?

European filmmakers, like England's Ken Loach and Mike Leigh, don't shy from the subject of class. Loach's *Bread and Roses* dramatized the 1990 Service Employees International Union's Justice for Janitors campaign in Los Angeles, and Leigh's entire career is virtually a paean to the working class. This is not to say that American studios don't make topical mainstream films. A kind of renaissance seemed to be blossoming in 2005, with material as varied as *Good Night, and Good Luck* and *The Constant Gardener*. But *Blood Diamond*—about the 1990s civil war in Sierra Leone partly sparked by international diamond speculators—was perhaps this season's only major studio picture that could be called politically daring, and it was a box-office disappointment. In the end, of course, financially successful or not, such movies don't fundamentally threaten the established order. They're well-crafted stories delivering conventional wisdom with considerable artistic skill.

Norma Rae was different. Its subject matter, never mind its politics, was enough to make a studio executive cringe: a movie about a union. On top of that, it was a story of platonic love between a Jewish intellectual and a factory worker; in Hollywood love stories, the audience wants the heroes to end up in bed. Even with a trio of creative giants—Ritt and his writers, Irving Ravetch and Harriet Frank Jr.—this was no easy sell. Casting could have helped; stars get movies made. But several leading actresses, among them Jane Fonda and Jill Clayburgh, turned down the title role. Creative issues aside, there was the problem of location. Where would you shoot the movie? Because of J.P. Stevens's influence, taking the production to most Southern towns would be impossible, and building your own textile mill, prohibitively costly. (With help from the union, Ritt found a unionized mill in Opelika, Alabama, where management agreed to let him shoot, with mill workers as extras playing themselves.) Finally, after overcoming all the odds, when released the movie was anything but an instant hit, and only after Sally Field won Best Actress at Cannes did it gradually go from dud to box-office success.

Since then, the entertainment community has kept its distance from the film. One indication of Hollywood's indifference came six years later, at the 1985 Academy Awards, when Field accepted her Oscar as Best Actress for *Places in the Heart*. "You like me," she said effusively, "right now, you like me." The audience response was nervous laughter, as if Sally Field were so needy as to consider an Academy Award a sign that she was "liked." This was, of course, not the case. Field had assumed, incorrectly, that most of her colleagues had seen her astonishing performance in *Norma Rae*. But in fact, many in the audience had no idea that she was referencing one of the picture's most memorable pieces of dialogue—her character's realization that her union organizer not merely respected her but liked her as a human being.

In the ensuing twenty years, the movie essentially disappeared. Otherwise movie-literate folks only vaguely remember Norma's quest. Alas, they don't know what they're missing. With Leibman and Field, the movie has two of the toughest and most generous performances in the history of American film. The film's language is simultaneously elegant and gritty. Of powerful moments, there is no end. When Norma commits herself to the organizing campaign, she asks the local minister to lend his church for a union meeting. "That's blacks and whites sitting together," Norma says. The minister, horrified, tells her, "We're going to miss your voice in the choir, Norma." She replies, "You're going to hear it raised up somewhere else."

Norma Rae *was different. Its subject matter was enough to make a studio executive cringe: a movie about a union.*

In an unusual twist, the movie's story played itself out in reality the year following its release. Sixteen years after a successful union election at the Roanoke Rapids mill, union members finally forced J.P. Stevens to the bargaining table. The film was a key factor in a nationwide boycott against Stevens—a campaign that became a model for coalitions of union supporters and union members. The Rev. David Dyson, who helped spearhead the Stevens boycott when he was on the union's staff, recalls: "The movie came along at the two-year point in the boycott, which hadn't picked up any steam. We found Crystal Lee Jordan [now Crystal Lee Sutton, the worker who inspired the Norma Rae character].... We put on a tour, including a great event in Los Angeles with Sally Field and Crystal Lee. The lights would come up and there would be the real Norma Rae and people would leap to their feet."

It's nearly impossible to imagine a similar movie that would bring them to their feet today. Television, a broader medium, is different, with an audience more fractionated and therefore, theoretically, more open to content that some might label controversial. Not so long ago there was *Roseanne*, which addressed head-on the darkness of power and social class and the tribulations of working life. Last year's Emmy winner *The Office* included a story line mocking a nasty anti-union campaign; the hugely popular *Grey's Anatomy* followed a nurses' strike with obvious sympathy for the nurses—even management, in the person of doctor George O'Malley, joined the picket line as the story revealed his upbringing in a pro-union home. One could argue that the brilliantly corrosive *Rescue Me*, about Denis Leary as a New York City firefighter and the personal lives of his colleagues, is a bold step into the interior world of the working class; but firefighters are unmistakably post-9/11 heroes. What's ultimately most telling about these examples is how unusual they are, far from television's norm, at a time when most Americans are losing economic ground. One new show this season, the polished and artful *Brothers & Sisters*, is about a wealthy family in Pasadena who own a business in which workers are nearly invisible; the primary stories involve the characters' tortured love lives. Ironically, the family matriarch—albeit a liberal ACLU-ish

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Dr. Malcolm David Eckel is Associate Professor of Religion at Boston University. He earned his Masters in Theology at Oxford and Ph.D. in the study of comparative religion at Harvard. In 1998, Professor Eckel received the Metcalf Award for Teaching Excellence, his university's highest award for teaching.

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matriarch—is played by none other than Sally Field.

It would be easy to blame the entertainment industry for the invisibility of working people fighting to better their lives. Ask writers in show business and they'll say, "Nobody cares about seeing those people on a screen" and "If audiences wanted to see that, the studios would make it" and, finally, the answer to nearly every question about the current condition of American filmmaking, "The studios have a mega-hit mentality; they don't want to make small pictures." But maybe there's another reason. Making *Norma Rae* in 1979 was hard enough; now it would probably be impossible. The country has changed. It's more difficult to build a mass movement for social and economic change, to find large numbers of Americans who care about social solidarity. If popular entertainment is, by definition, mass entertainment, what happens when no mass exists, when an insufficient number of people occupy cultural common ground? In that case, for whom would you make *Norma Rae*?

"You live there, and you become one of them," Sally Field said in a documentary issued with the DVD of *Norma Rae*, "and you try to stand at their machine and thread it and run it, and...you learn to appreciate how difficult their lives are, and chances are you're never getting out." Which, for the most part, is how things remain. The American labor movement is arguably in more trouble now than it was then. Where is the next movie that might hope to change the course of history?

Of movies about ideas and social justice, Sam Goldwyn famously said, "If you want to send a message, call Western Union." In other words, moviemakers are in the movie business, not the social change business. And so tomorrow we won't go to the tenplex and find movies about Wal-Mart workers fighting for health and pension benefits, or turn on the television and find a working-class hero struggling to pay the electric bill. (Isn't it odd that people on TV hardly ever seem to worry about gas prices?) If we are to find a *Roseanne* or a *Norma Rae* again in popular entertainment, if we are to make movies that can affect the course of history, we need to find something else first, something difficult to see on the horizon. We need to find a belief in an ideal disappearing not only from our movies but also from our lives—the notion that we do, in fact, share common ground, and that if we ignore the lives of the least fortunate in our society we may well be ignoring the future of our society itself. ■

IN JUST SIX SHORT YEARS, GEORGE W. BUSH HAS SQUANDERED CENTURIES OF PROGRESS.

How to Fix Our Democracy

[redacted]

Democracy can come undone. It's not something that's necessarily going to last forever once it's been established. —Sean Wilentz
The Rise of American Democracy

CHRISTOPHER SERRA

Now that the Democrats' "100 hours agenda" has at least passed the House—and as Bush & Co. head toward retirement—the hard work of restoring our democracy must begin. For while the President frequently talks about exporting democracy, he has systematically undermined it here at home.

Not that this democracy was perfect before Bush had his way with it. If democracy means majority rule, minority rights and the rule of law, then the Constitution contained language that was far from democratic. Only men with property could vote. Blacks counted as three-fifths of a person. The Senate was not elected, and states of varying sizes had the same representation.

Yet despite this flawed start, our system evolved into a stronger democracy. Senators became popularly elected in 1913; women won the vote in 1920 and African-Americans forty-five years later. In the 1930s, '60s and '90s, Democratic administrations showed that a democracy could expand public healthcare, provide for old-age insurance, make products safer and clean the air.

This two-century advance has recently been reversed. A powerful group of new authoritarians in the executive branch, Congress, the clergy and corporations have expressed enormous contempt for the conversation of democracy. Trampling on the values represented by the flag far more than the couple of fools a year who actually burn one, these leaders pose a clear and present danger to our constitutional traditions. This quiet crisis of democracy—lacking the vivid imagery of a Hindenburg, a 9/11 or soldiers being shot in Iraq—has attracted very little attention. But a better democracy requires better policies. With the Democrats finally back on the offensive, it's time to repair the broken machinery of government.

The Democracy Protection Act—developed by the New Democracy Project, the Brennan Center for Justice, Demos and *The Nation*—can help us recover from Bush's assaults as well as fix structural flaws that have long diminished our democracy and frustrated majority support for progressive reforms. It identifies five key areas calling out for popular reform.

Taking liberties with the law. Apparently, when Bush swore to "faithfully execute the laws," he took that oath literally. In just six years, his Administration has, in violation of the UN Charter, invaded a country, condoned torture, refused to seek warrants for

Mark Green, president of the New Democracy Project, is the author, most recently, of Losing Our Democracy. *This article is based on research done by the New Democracy Project, Demos, the Brennan Center for Justice and* The Nation. *The views expressed are solely those of the author.*

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wiretaps, leaked classified information for partisan gain, rounded up thousands of American Muslims without evidence, incarcerated hundreds at Guantánamo without charges, restricted habeas corpus and asserted the power to ignore hundreds of duly enacted laws—all because of an open-ended "war on terror."

For 200 years after *Marbury v. Madison*, courts had the final say on interpreting laws and the Constitution. Then Bush aides forwarded the "unitary executive" theory, according to which the President may nullify laws after signing them. He has produced 800 "signing statements" so far, asserting that if he thinks a law unwise, he simply won't enforce it—*Marbury* be damned.

When Bush, defending his flagrant violation of the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, argued that the requirement of warrants for wiretaps could be ignored because of his "inherent powers" in wartime, it was too much even for a veteran of President Reagan's Justice Department. "This is a defining moment in the constitutional history of the United States," said Bruce Fein. "The theory invoked by the president...would equally justify mail openings, burglaries, torture or internment camps, all in the name of gathering foreign intelligence."

It took the Supreme Court—seven of whose nine members were appointed by conservative Republican Presidents—to remind Bush in both the 2004 *Hamdi* and 2006 *Hamdan* decisions that the rule of law is not a means but an end in itself. "A state of war," wrote Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in *Hamdi*, "is not a blank check for the President."

The legislative broken branch. Under the recent DeLay/Hastert Congressional regime, Democrats were cut out of bill-writing while corporate lobbyists sat with Hill staff drafting legislation. Congress abdicated its checks-and-balances function entirely, becoming little more than a West Wing of the White House. The House held 140 hours of hearings, for example, into whether President Clinton used his Christmas list for fundraising and twelve into abuses at Abu Ghraib. Speaker Dennis Hastert would only schedule a bill for a vote if it had support from a "majority of the majority" party and would hold a vote open for as many hours as necessary to secure—i.e., arm-twist—a victory. Senator Hillary Clinton was right to call that system "a plantation."

But the crisis of democracy in our legislative branch has hardly abated just because the GOP was trounced in November. Money rather than merit so often determines elections that Congressional incumbents listen more to donors than to voters. Accountability has been further eroded by politicized redistricting, which means fewer and fewer competitive elections. The defeat of twenty incumbent House Republicans (it was five in 2002 and four in 2004) is not serious evidence to the contrary: A twelve-point polling spread favoring Republicans in 1994 led to a fifty-two-seat switch that year, while a larger, fifteen-point gap favoring Democrats produced only a thirty-seat switch in 2006.

There is also a stunning violation of democracy built into the Senate that should be part of any discussion about majority rule. Today California, with a population of 36 million, elects 2 percent of the Senate, while twenty-one other states with the same total population elect 42 percent. It's surely not "one person, one vote" when people living in the smallest states have twenty times the say as people in the largest. The Electoral College is similarly biased toward small, rural, largely red states—something to recall next time a conservative politician rails against a judicial filibuster or affirmative action.

A democracy without voters. By the gauge of electoral turnout, America is in the bottom fifth of democracies in the world. Compare our recent average turnout of 48 percent of eligible voters in presidential years to Cambodia's 90 percent, Western Europe's 77 percent and Eastern Europe's 68 percent. If there were a World Bank index of "democracy poverty," the United States would be a candidate for massive international aid.

In most states, cumbersome rules discourage the vote. Why should voter registration laws presume that thousands of 18-year-olds each find their way to an Election Board, instead of having one Election Board representative go to each high school?

In addition, local political operatives often suppress the vote in discriminatory ways, as we witnessed in Ohio in 2004. Beyond the well-known example of Republican officials intentionally failing to provide sufficient voting machines in low-income Democratic precincts, conservative activists also put up signs in African-American areas of Cuyahoga County telling voters that if anyone in their family voted illegally they could lose custody of their children, that they couldn't vote if they had unpaid utility bills and that Republicans were supposed to vote on Tuesday and Democrats on Wednesday! The intent of these and other crass intimidation tactics was plainly revealed in 2004 by Representative John Pappageorge, a Michigan Republican, when he said, "If we do not suppress the Detroit vote, we're going to have a tough time in this election cycle."

One way most states, especially in the Old South, suppress the low-income vote legally is through felony disenfranchise-

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ment laws. Even though they've "paid their debt to society," ex-cons in thirty-five states are deprived of the right to vote, which means, for example, that one in six black men in Alabama is excluded. Seven million Americans—or one in thirty-two—are currently behind bars, on parole or on probation, and they are disproportionately African-American and Latino. Felony disenfranchisement laws are just another way to spell Jim Crow.

Nor has the controversy over counting votes ended with those chads in Florida. While the 2002 Help America Vote Act properly required that states move to electronic voting (something Brazil figured out how to do a decade ago), many of the electronic machines used last November provided no paper trail, a failure whose repercussions are now on view in the continuing imbroglio over the Sarasota, Florida, Congressional seat. And as the Brennan Center for Justice has documented, most electronic machines are easily hackable. Will we find out in twenty years that a handful of Republican operatives re-elected W. by rigging some software in Ohio?

Secrecy and democracy. Remember that early aphorism of the computer age, "Garbage in, garbage out"? Just as machines fail when fed corrupt information, democracy fails when important decisions are based on bad data or no data.

The good people of Salem, Massachusetts, were sure that certain women were possessed, and many Americans were convinced of the need to invade Iraq because George W. Bush downplayed the risks and hinted that Saddam played a role in 9/11. When ideology trumps facts, the results are often disastrous.

To insure a healthy democracy with plenty of well-reasoned debate, then, secrets should be kept to a minimum. Yet during the hot and cold wars of the twentieth century, as the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan pointed out, a "culture of secrecy" took root in Washington. And the Bush Administration has deepened this culture, skillfully capitalizing on the calamity of 9/11 to hide information in the name of "national security" and concentrate authority in the "war President." Patrick Leahy, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, says, "Of the six administrations I've worked with, this is the most secretive."

The economics of democracy. Economist Jeff Madrick, writing in 2003, asked some difficult questions as part of a lengthy analy-

Democracy Protection Act

Rule of Law

1. Create oversight of presidential signing statements. Establish rules limiting the power of these "statements" to become unilateral declarations of law.
2. End torture, not habeas corpus. Overturn the recent Military Commissions Act.
3. Stop workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation. Bar discrimination against gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual workers.
4. Establish a civil right to counsel. Provide counsel to the indigent in major civil cases just as it's provided in criminal cases under *Gideon v. Wainwright*.

Democratizing Congress

5. Tighten lobbying laws. Enact bans on lobbyists' meals, travel and bundling of gifts, and create an independent Congressional Public Integrity Office to investigate transgressions.
6. Enact "democracy funding" of campaigns. Establish a federal system of public matching funds for qualifying candidates so that small donors diminish the sway of big interests.
7. Guarantee free airtime for qualifying candidates. Require broadcasters to provide TV and radio time for qualifying federal candidates as a condition of holding lucrative Federal Communications Commission licenses.

Expanding the Franchise

8. Enact Election Day registration. Make it easier to vote by keeping voter registration open until and on Election Day—and merge Veterans Day and Election Day to create a national voting holiday called "Democracy Day."
9. Enforce national voting standards. Create national standards to assure a more professional, trained, nonpartisan staff to implement Election Day. Allow voting by mail for two weeks before the election.
10. Criminalize voter intimidation. Make it a felony to knowingly try to stop others from voting.
11. Make electronic voting secure. Use electronic voting machines with paper trails to deter and detect fraud.
12. Restore the vote to ex-felons. Enfranchise ex-offenders who have paid their debt to society.
13. Insure responsible redistricting. Establish a nonpartisan system in which former judges draw the legislative boundaries.
14. Elect Presidents by national vote. Organize states that together comprise a majority of the Electoral College to commit their electors to the candidate who wins the national popular vote.

Transparent Government

15. Strengthen the Freedom of Information Act. Establish a presumption that all federal agencies release information reasonably requested under the act. There should be a "right to know," not the requirement to prove a "need to know."
16. Reduce media concentration. Enact cross-media ownership rules prohibiting one corporate owner from largely monopolizing print and electronic news in a given population area.

Economic Justice

17. Create a living wage. Raise the minimum wage to a living wage indexed to inflation and reviewed biennially.
18. Tax all income equally and eliminate the Alternative Minimum Tax. Adjust the tax code to treat labor and capital comparably and end this tax on the middle class.
19. Review corporate compensation. Mandate that only independent directors on a corporate board can vote for increases in executive pay and subject these to shareholder approval.
20. Expand the right to organize at work. Allow employees to form a union if a majority signs recognition cards, and impose penalties on employers who use intimidation and firings to discourage organizing.

For all forty proposals of the "Democracy Protection Act," plus detailed explanations, go to www.newdemocracyproject.org.

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sis of the US economy: "Where does income and wealth inequality start to impinge on civil and political rights and on America's long commitment to equality of economic opportunity? Where does it both reflect a failure of democracy and contribute to its weakening?" When the head of ExxonMobil recently earned $368 million in a year—more *per hour* than his workers earn *per year*—it's not hard to see why Madrick concluded, "There is a good argument to be made that we are already there." The rich have become the super-rich, and middle-class families feel as if they're running up a down escalator. Even a snapshot of the data is convincing: In 1980 the wealthiest 5 percent of US households earned 16.5 percent of all income; in 1990 it was 18.5 percent; in 2000, 22.1 percent. Meanwhile, real median income for men has fallen for five straight years. The number of poor has increased from 31 million to 37 million since 2000, and the number without health insurance rose from 41 million to 47 million.

Not since the Gilded Age, when wealthy businessmen effectively appointed senators, has big business held such sway in Washington. Scores of laws and policies implemented by Bush 43—cutting job-training programs, eroding the minimum wage, slashing taxes on the rich and social programs for the poor—have hastened the tilt from labor to capital. George Bush has redistributed wealth far more than George McGovern was ever accused of—except up, not down.

Or as Louis Brandeis wrote: "We can have democracy in this country, or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both."

Emergencies are easy ways to justify extremism, as radicals from Father Coughlin to Joe McCarthy have taught us. But today America is witnessing an authoritarian impulse from those at the highest levels of government.

When questioned two years ago about his failed policy in Iraq, Bush famously said, "We had an accountability moment and that's called the 2004 elections," casually dismissing the checks and balances built into our government for the 1,460 days between presidential elections. Last fall, former Speaker Newt Gingrich suggested that we suspend parts of the First Amendment during the "war on terrorism." In January White House press secretary Tony Snow said the President "has the ability to exercise his own authority if he thinks Congress has voted the wrong way." And now Bush and Cheney are implying that they can attack Iran at will, without any prior Congressional authorization, in clear violation of the Constitution and statutory law. We are edging toward what James Madison warned of, in a line cited in the *Hamdan* decision: "The accumulation of all powers legislative, executive and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny."

So just as the last half of the twentieth century saw a quadrupling of the number of democracies around the globe—just as, in the view of historian John Lewis Gaddis, "the world came closer than ever before to reaching a consensus...that only democracy confers legitimacy"—the world's oldest democracy is being systematically undermined by radical reactionaries. We are another Bush/Cheney White House, another DeLay Congress, another Scalia on the Court away from permanently losing our democracy. In six short years, George W. Bush has not only blown a large inherited federal surplus, he has also squandered an inheritance of centuries of democracy progress. That's not alarmist. It's merely descriptive of the quiet crisis our democracy now faces.

At a December colloquium on this subject in New York City, Bill Moyers (in a speech published in the January 22 *Nation*) observed that what America needs is not just a "must do" list from liberals but "a different story," one with the power to inspire us and challenge the prevailing conservative narrative of private = good, public = bad. That story is democracy. While theocrats and plutocrats pose as populists, it's essential that progressive patriots—for what can be more patriotic than democracy?—erect stronger levees to withstand the oceans of money, lobbyists and lawless officials threatening to drown America's constitutional traditions. For only then can our government represent the large majorities in favor of universal healthcare, stricter gun control, withdrawal from Iraq and more.

The Democracy Protection Act is offered up to officials, activists and citizens alike in the spirit of Walt Whitman, who wrote that "America is always becoming." ■

EXCHANGE
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)
Nashville, Tenn.

■ Bob Moser's article was a breath of fresh air. Way too many people who ought to know better are pontificating about the supposed truths made self-evident by the likes of Tom Schaller.

An acquaintance of mine sports a bumper sticker reading "What would MLK do?" King, a Southerner and arguably the most influential of modern-day ethical leaders, would certainly not argue in favor of leaving those in the most heavily African-American region in the country to fend for themselves while Republican Lite Democratic leaders and actual Republicans slice and dice their healthcare benefits and levy 10 percent sales taxes on their food. And yet somehow it escapes most Schaller acolytes that cutting off the South from the resources of the national Democratic Party carries with it some weighty spiritual concerns. What's really ironic is that Schaller finished a book last summer about black legislators; one wonders how he regards the forces shaping their fates as morally neutral where political influence is concerned.

Winning a presidential election without one Southern state requires a strategy that leaves zero margin for error. (Armchair strategists can try crafting a winnable electoral margin at www.270towin.com.) Omitting the South requires victory in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri, Hawaii, Maine and a handful of other states; all well and good in theory—but do right-thinking people really want to put the election of the leader of the free world in the hands of a few hundred thousand people in Hawaii? Such a strategy broadcasts vulnerability to Republicans, who exploited a similar situation when Al Gore requested recounts in only a handful of Florida counties. It'd be a simple matter for the RNC to channel its formidable resources into a small state or group of small states and crush Democrats' dreams into jelly—this before voting-machine shenanigans and other ballot-suppression devices the GOP seems to have honed to an art form.

(Speaking of Florida, Schaller omits it in every argument for excising the South from the Dems' battle plans. I'd speculate he hasn't spent

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EXCHANGE

much time in the Panhandle, affectionately known to us in the region as Baja Alabama.)

Losing even one of those states would restore Republican rule for another eight years, and last I checked there was certainly no guarantee the Dems would win states like Ohio or Wisconsin consistently—especially since many states required to reach the magic number of 270 have heavily Republican state legislative bodies and/or Republican governors. Local electoral dynamics will influence statewide campaigns.

How refreshing to read in a national outlet what many Southern Democrats already know: Al Gore lost his home state of Tennessee for a simple reason. He didn't campaign here. The DNC, having abandoned the South some years ago, is losing the culture wars here, without a peep of protest. Democrats are portrayed, on 50,000 watts of talk-radio every minute, all day every day, as limp-wristed apologists personifying Rush Limbaugh's caricature of the left. Had the party under Terry McAuliffe made even token gestures to counteract that image, I'd hazard you wouldn't see so many Southern Democrats running to the right on social issues.

In 2008, most Senate elections will be held in the South and Midwest. Unless the Democrats step up their activity in those two regions, control of the Senate will pass to Republicans. Instead of blaming some inherent quality of Southerners for their own failure to compete, Democrats would do well to craft a strategy that at its basic level includes a willingness to show up—which, as the old quote attributed to everyone from Sun Tsu to Woody Allen expresses, is 90 percent of success. JEAN C. WILSON

San Francisco

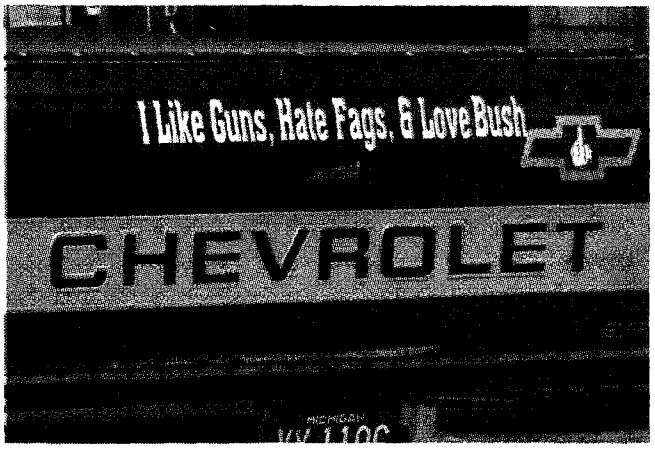
■ It's amusing, if somewhat depressing, to see *The Nation* repeatedly holding forth on potential Democratic strategies for rural America, or the West, or the South. Bob Moser offers the latest installment with a generally cogent analysis of how progressives might win in the South. The problem with his analysis and the others is that the Democrats aren't a progressive party and really never were. The Democrats won last time because just enough people in just enough districts became just enough fed up to vote the rascals out; this time the rascals happened to be Republican. The Democratic victories, with the elevation of fundraiser-in-chief Nancy Pelosi to House Speaker, will do nothing to change the fundamental mealy-mouthedness of the Democratic Party. Witness the strategic appointment of the newest, more conservative Democrats to committees where they will be best able to rake in corporate campaign cash, and explain to me again how the Democrats can become a progressive party.

The South needs what the rest of the country needs: the ability to vote its conscience. The Democrats could use their (probably temporary) legislative majority to put forward proposals for instant-runoff voting, direct presidential elections or even proportional representation. Why should they? Because it's the only way a party based on not being as bad as the other one has a prayer of winning. Progressive voters could choose whether to vote for Greens, progressive Independents or Democrats. We could have real debates in the South and elsewhere about how, say, to restructure agriculture so it doesn't bankrupt the family farm.

For progressives to win anywhere, we need to put forth principled candidates with principled positions. But we shouldn't tie our hands by thinking that this means joining or supporting a corporate party like the Democrats—at least not as a first choice. PAUL QUICK

Bark River, Mich.

■ Here's the way it is up North. HAL MARTIN



MOSER REPLIES

New York City

■ I appreciate the many enthusiastic responses from readers and wish we had space to print every last kudos and quibble. And while we differ dramatically about how to get there, I appreciate the fact that Tom Schaller's quarry is ultimately the same as mine: a genuinely progressive Democratic Party that is a powerful champion for working Americans.

I can't argue with Schaller's point that a large-scale transformation of white Southerners' voting habits will be no easy or overnight task. But this is critically important work far too long neglected, not just by the national Democratic Party but also by liberal foundations and nonprofits. And it won't take a sea change in political attitudes for Democrats to make short-term gains in states like Florida, Virginia, Arkansas or my native North Carolina (where I lived my first thirty-six years). I'm glad Schaller points out that white Southerners aren't voting Republican because of their views on issues like abortion or national defense. But in isolating "negative racial attitudes" as the key to white Republicanism in states like Mississippi, he's on shaky ground. It's essential to remember that white folks in states like Mississippi haven't been consistently challenged to overcome what lingers of their old racial biases and fears and vote for their own best economic interests. They've had little reason to believe that Democrats in Washington would make their lives substantially better than the conservatives they've been supporting.

It's true that organized labor's "meager presence" in the South makes economic populism a somewhat harder sell; there are simply fewer Southerners accustomed to viewing politics through the prism of pocketbook and workplace issues. But there is a tradition—pre-Southern Strategy—of white Southerners voting for economic liberalism. And economic conditions in the region—not just higher poverty levels but widespread losses of manufacturing jobs and a starker level of income inequality than anywhere in the country—make the region's voters (white, black and Latino) a potentially receptive audience for a strong, unbending message of economic fairness. The idea that many white voters would shrink from such an alliance because of "residual tensions from the civil rights movement" strikes me, frankly, as absurd. The surprisingly passive acceptance of legal integration in the South, once it finally came, should long ago have laid to rest the notion that white Southerners are somehow uniquely and incurably racist—especially when violent resistance to "forced busing" was so much more widespread in the North. (And as our Michigan picture-letter shows, other forms of bigotry are not unknown in the North.)

Schaller's idea that moving more Yankees down South would "heal" the region's politics is both insulting and wrongheaded. Millions of newcomers have blessed the region with their presence these past thirty years, but they don't tend to be liberal-minded Democrats, to say the least. Over the past decade, for instance, North Carolina has picked up about 1.5 million new voters, two-thirds of them either Republican or unaffiliated (while overall 45 percent of the state's voters are still registered Democrats). Far from being a boon to Southern political "enlightenment," non-native Southerners have, in many areas, presented a new and sizable obstacle to progressive populism in Dixie.

The plain fact is that there is no way to know whether a strong Democratic message of progressive populism could transform Southern politics. Folks like Schaller can argue into infinity that it wouldn't, and folks like me can argue that it would—but it's all purely theoretical until Democrats decide to give it a go. Now's the time. BOB MOSER

WATCHING OUR N'S & Q'S—& KEVIN

■ An editing error caused a quote in Michael T. Klare's "Targeting Tehran" [March 5] to misidentify Iraq as Iran. The quote should have begun, "When we find devices in [Iraq]...."

In Amanda Spake's "Dying for a Home" [Feb. 26] the spokesman for the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association is *Kevin* Broom.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Empire Fall

CHRISTIAN PARENTI

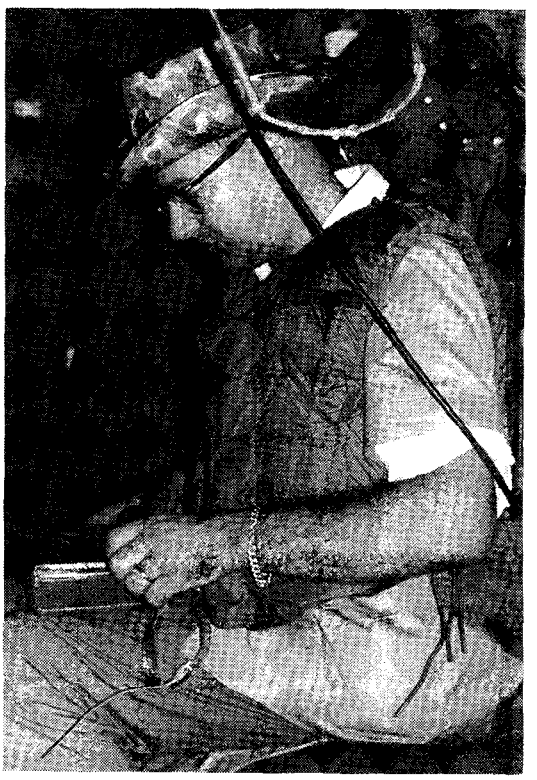
BERNARD FALL: Memories of a Soldier-Scholar.
By Dorothy Fall.
Potomac. 285 pp. $27.50.

Forty years ago a bookish French Indochina specialist—who was also a media celebrity in the United States—stepped on a landmine in Vietnam while accompanying a platoon of US Marines on patrol. Bernard Fall was making his sixth trip to Vietnam, where he found (and perhaps sought) the brutal end that would finish the wild and romantic project that was his life. He was blown up on a dirt track that French soldiers, more than a decade before, had dubbed *la rue sans joie*.

Fall's biography could be divided into three or four parts, each of which would contain enough drama for a whole life. While still a youth, he lost his parents in the Holocaust, fought in the French Resistance and conducted crucial research at the Nuremberg trials. He kept company with famous intellectuals, diplomats, soldiers and political dissidents; fathered a large family; and was a prolific writer and scholar, publishing nine books and scores of articles. In 1956 he became a professor at Howard, the premier African-American university in the United States, where he taught until his death.

When, on February 21, 1967, Fall stepped on that landmine on the "street without joy," or Vietnam's coastal Highway 1, he was ranked among the world's leading academic specialists on Southeast Asia and a famous war correspondent. Several of Fall's books are still in print, notably *Street Without Joy* (1961) and *Hell in a Very Small Place* (1966). Both of these are intensely detailed military histories: The first is an overview of the French war in Indochina; the second focuses on the definitive battle of Dien Bien Phu.

Fall's extraordinary life, for all its intrigue, is only part of the reason we should remember him. Though he has been dead as long as he was alive, his legacy lives on in strange ways. As a technocratic critic of war who was close to the warmakers—a contradictory if not schizophrenic position that allowed him to have it both ways—Fall helped lay the foundations for a genre of war reportage that is still very much in fashion in American journalism. Now, on the fortieth anniversary of his death, Fall's widow, Dorothy Fall, has written *Bernard Fall: Memories of a Soldier-Scholar*. An account of his adventures, and of the complexities of his personality, *Memories of a Soldier-Scholar* is perhaps more revealing than intended—and not only of Fall himself.



Bernard Fall in Vietnam, 1965

Fall was born in 1926 in Vienna to Leo Fall and Anna Seligmann, Polish Jews who had moved to Austria and then fled the Nazi takeover for France in the late 1930s. After France fell to Germany in 1940, Anna was deported to Germany and died in the camps. Leo was eventually tortured to death by the Germans on suspicions of aiding the French Resistance. Bernard used fake papers to pass as Catholic and at age 16 infiltrated the paramilitary Compagnons de France—Vichy's version of the Hitler Youth. Within the Compagnons there was an under-

Christian Parenti, a frequent contributor to The Nation *on international affairs, is the author of* The Freedom: Shadows and Hallucinations in Occupied Iraq *(New Press).*

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ground of Jews passing as gentiles and organizing what Fall once called "terrorism" against the occupation, from sabotage to assassinations. Fall's comrades carried out the assassination of at least one Nazi soldier and helped bring many other Vichy collaborators to informal justice.

As the Allied invasion approached and then as the Allies moved east, the Resistance picked up steam. During the final stages of the war, young Bernard saw real combat in the Alps against the retreating but still tenacious Germans. It must have been terrifying, sad and, as war always is, unseemly and frantic. But it may also have been cathartic for the adolescent Fall to help destroy the very enemies who had murdered his parents.

After liberation in 1944, Fall joined the French army, in which he served for two years. He then worked as an analyst for the Nuremberg Tribunal, which doubtless gave him his first taste of his intellectual powers. Investigating the Nazi-affiliated Krupp industries, Fall did much to help convict Nazi Party member Alfred Krupp, who was sentenced to twelve years. But when the cold war heated up, the new US High Commissioner, John McCloy, freed Krupp, who was being groomed as an American ally in West Germany. For the sake of the "free world," the SS party member, munitions manufacturer and employer of Jewish slave labor was allowed to go back to business.

Though Dorothy Fall's book does not explore this, the Krupp pardon must have been a formative intellectual experience for a young man of such high ideals. What was the lesson in this betrayal? That in the democratic West, anti-Communism trumped all else—even punishment for anti-Semitic Nazi war profiteers; even the integrity of the law. In politics what mattered was the mechanics of power, not principle.

The wrenching experiences of coming of age amid war, occupation and genocide clearly shaped Fall in other ways. One was his attitude toward being Jewish. Despite his parents' fate (or perhaps because of it), Fall never really identified as a Jew. One reason that he cited was his disdain for the Jewish Council in Nice, which had given the names of Jews to Vichy officials. Another was fear. "I don't want my children raised as Jews," he told Dorothy. "I don't want anyone coming after them the next time." Yet this fear seemed only to drive Fall closer to the flame. He would test himself to be ready, to prove he would be able to fight if there was a "next time." Toward the end of his first long trip to Vietnam in 1953, Fall wrote to Dorothy, whom he married a few months later, that he had "mixed feelings" about leaving Vietnam. "With all my bookish air and with my highly peaceable education, I nevertheless enjoy a good tough scrape, just to prove to myself that I'm no sissy. I guess that I've been trying to prove a point to myself ever since my parents died."

Writing on Vietnam, Fall pioneered a style of 'neutral' war reportage that steers clear of questions of justice and material interests.

Dorothy Fall invokes Bernard's childhood experiences to explain his reckless bravery as a soldier and war correspondent. But I think these experiences also shed light on his political positions, or more precisely his curious reluctance to condemn French and American imperialism in Vietnam. On the one hand, he was willing to wager everything—finally his own life—in search of knowledge; on the other, he was politically coy, even timid. For all his physical courage, he was politically cautious, deeply wary of offending the great interests that are the magnetic North, by which all institutions—including magazines, publishers and universities—set their course.

Fall harbored few illusions about the Americans who had let Krupp go free, but one lesson he may have drawn from the Nazi occupation was that resistance without US backing would have been futile. Over the course of his career, Fall provided his services to the US government, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization and even the government of South Vietnam, while Dorothy worked as an artist for the US Information Agency. It was, to say the least, a peculiar collection of patrons for a man who is often remembered as a member of the antiwar left, not as a defense establishment intellectual.

After Nuremberg, Fall began his university studies, which took him to the University of Paris, to Munich, to Johns Hopkins and to Syracuse for a PhD. He had an amazing facility with languages, speaking German, French, English and some Vietnamese. One gets the impression that Fall had a mind that was permanently charged on adrenaline in a way that allowed him to race through written material, just as one might race through the underbrush or through a city grid if pursued by, or pursuing, enemies.

It was during his sojourn in America that a mentor suggested that Fall study Indochina, given the young man's fluency in French and his firsthand experience with both the French military (which was then bogged down in Vietnam) and guerrilla warfare. In 1953, while still in graduate school, Fall went to Vietnam, paying for the trip himself. As a former officer in the French army, he was given wide-ranging access, transportation and mess privileges. In the nomenclature of today's war reporting, we might say he had a carte blanche embed. Upon his return he wrote an influential piece for *The Nation*, predicting the French defeat a few months later.

Over the next thirteen years he made five more trips. His first job out of graduate school in 1955 found him, for lack of other opportunities, producing area studies handbooks (country profiles) for the Psychological Warfare Division of the US Army. Fall's widow glosses over whether imperial patronage compromised his objectivity, insisting that Bernard remained unbiased. Yet in most of his writing on Vietnam, Fall advanced a technical analysis of the war in which criticisms were confined to tactical errors and political blunders by the French and the Americans. He assiduously avoided discussing the war in terms of justice or larger material interests. Under the guise of objectivity he conveyed an anti-Communist hostility to the Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF) while to some extent minimizing the crimes of the French and, later, those of the United States. From Fall's perspective the killing of civilians by Western armies in the heart of Southeast Asia was a tactical error rather than a war crime or imperial atrocity that inadvertently revealed the war's true logic.

According to Dorothy Fall, Bernard usually banged out his prose in one sitting and mailed off his first drafts without looking back. At times it shows, for while his writing can be fluid and excited, it can also feel cluttered with detail, meandering, in need of a guiding thesis. Fall's brisk pace also shows in the amazing volume he produced during barely a decade and a half of writing. Some of his later essays are sparse and well crafted; these also tend to be the somewhat more critical pieces. "Our 'Skyraider' was loaded with 750-pound napalm bombs," wrote Fall in a 1965 story for *Ramparts* that described an air assault on a Vietnamese fishing village.

> We came down low, flying very fast, and I could see some of the villagers trying to

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A PETITION CALLING FOR THE DISMANTLING OF THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

The No Child Left Behind Act:

1. Misdiagnoses the causes of poor educational development, blaming teachers and students for problems over which they have no control.

2. Assumes that competition is the primary motivator of human behavior and that market forces can cure all educational ills.

3. Mandates data driven instruction based on gamesmanship to undermine public confidence in our schools.

4. Uses pseudo science and media manipulation to justify pro-corporate policies and programs, including diverting taxes away from communities and into corporate coffers.

5. Ignores the proven inadequacies, inefficiencies, and problems associated with centralized, "top-down" control.

6. Places control of what is taught in corporate hands many times removed from students, teachers, parents, local school boards, and communities.

7. Requires the use of materials and procedures more likely to produce a passive, compliant workforce than creative, resilient, inquiring, critical, compassionate, engaged members of our democracy.

8. Reflects and perpetuates massive distrust of the skill and professionalism of educators.

9. Allows life-changing, institution-shaping decisions to hinge on single measures of performance.

10. Emphasizes minimum content standards rather than maximum development of human potential.

11. Neglects the teaching of higher order thinking skills which cannot be evaluated by machines.

12. Applies standards to discrete subjects rather than to larger goals such as insightful children, vibrant communities, and a healthy democracy.

13. Forces schools to adhere to a testing regime, with no provision for innovating, adapting to social change, encouraging creativity, or respecting student and community individuality, nuance, and difference.

14. Drives art, foreign language, physical education, geography, history, civics and other non-tested subjects, such as music, out of the curriculum, especially in low-income neighborhoods.

15. Produces multiple, unintended consequences for students, teachers, and communities, including undermining neighborhood schools and blurring the line between church and state.

16. Rates and ranks public schools using procedures that will gradually label them all "failures," so when they fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress, as all schools eventually will, they can be "saved" by vouchers, charters, or privatization.

To read the research supporting these arguments, to add your name to the growing list of signers, and to support this movement, please visit www.educatorroundtable.org.

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> head away from the burning shore in their sampans. The village was burning fiercely. I will never forget the sight of the fishing nets in flame, covered with burning, jellied gasoline.... There were probably between 1,000 and 1,500 people living in the fishing village we attacked. It is difficult to estimate how many were killed. It is equally difficult to judge if there actually were any Viet Cong in the village, and if so, if any were killed.

Though accounts like this laid bare the cruelty of the war, Fall never probed its deeper causes. Why was all this indiscriminate violence being unleashed? "I can see the means only too clearly," he wrote. "But I cannot say that I have found anyone who seems to have a clear idea of the end—of the 'war aims'—and if the end is not clearly defined, are we justified to use any means to attain it?" Deep inside the forest, he remained fixated on the trees, never pulling back for a discussion of economic interests and grand cold war strategy.

Fall's immersion in the details of war occasionally gave his books a rambling structure. In *Street Without Joy*, he intersperses straight military history with diary sections based on letters to his wife, and also with quasi-ethnographic chapters on the culture of the war. Still, Fall's asides could be arresting. In a chapter titled "*Diary*: The Women," he writes of women in the war, discussing not only the French army's very tough and heavily decorated female officers but the North African prostitutes who worked in mobile field brothels patronized by French soldiers. It's hard to believe such arrangements really existed—in today's US military, soldiers deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan aren't even given beer!

Perhaps it's unfair to chastise Fall for failing to move beyond a technical critique of the war. After all, he was never a man of the left. Like many of his peers, including David Halberstam and Neil Sheehan, he was a mainstream cold war liberal who moved left on Vietnam as the US involvement there became both hopeless and horrifically costly not only for the Vietnamese but for US soldiers as well. And Fall paid for his audacity as a reporter, becoming marginalized by an establishment that had welcomed his contributions: After he traveled to North Vietnam to interview Ho Chi Minh in 1962, he found himself persona non grata in South Vietnam, while his funding from pro-Saigon sources began to dry up. Fall's critiques were also stringent enough to incur the wrath of J. Edgar Hoover, who—concerned not that Fall was a Communist but that he was a French spy—put him under sporadic FBI surveillance from 1958 until 1965.

By the late '60s, when opposition to the war had spread to the liberal mainstream, the technical critique favored by the "objective" Fall was merging with antiwar arguments of the peace movement, which tended to be grounded in a political critique of American intervention and infused with moral rage at US atrocities. Just as the establishment earlier had reached out to Fall, so too did the growing peace movement. The war's critics had needs similar to those of the war's planners: They had to understand the politics and culture of this faraway place, Vietnam, and Fall was overflowing with information.

It is the question of intellectual style or form that perhaps most connects Fall to the present—for Fall's style is with us in much of today's "critical" writing on Iraq and Afghanistan. Fall conveyed the impression that his reporting was an act of description rather than of political engagement; he relied on the typical journalistic and academic conceit of "objectivity" and "neutrality." For the most part his view of the conflict lay hidden behind a prose fogged by dense military detail. Insofar as he expressed his opinions, it was through adjectives, innuendo and quiet policy suggestions. For example, he criticized the French for not having prepared the local Vietnamese with psychological operations; later, he floated the possibility that the United States could try to split the NLF off from North Vietnam. But he would never question the reasons the French and the Americans were in Vietnam in the first place. Reasons of state were something he took for granted.

As the United States and its closest NATO allies sink deeper into the crises of Iraq and Afghanistan, Fall's instrumentalist style of critique is again in fashion. Thomas Ricks's anatomy of American failure in Iraq, *Fiasco*, is a recent example of this, as is George Packer's anguished but ultimately pro-war *Assassins' Gate*.

There is another way Fall's ghost haunts us today: The cult of war-oriented experiential knowledge is back. Fall's epistemology placed great importance on seeing one's subject up close. "You cannot keep up your convictions if you don't base them on things that you have witnessed for yourself," Fall said, explaining why he kept returning to Vietnam. "Or, if you want to change your convictions, you had better do it on the basis of your own experience." Whether that is true is open to debate. But something else is undeniable: In societies on a permanent war footing, like the United States in the age of the "long war" on "terror," people who go to war have more political capital than those who stay home. This rule applies not only to military and political careers but also to intellectual ones. Since the end of the cold war and especially in recent years, we've seen a return of this logic and of the Fall model of intellectual generalists gaining political legitimacy by taking personal risks—that is, by traveling to the empire's war zones. (I am referring not only to newspaper correspondents but also to intellectuals, among them authors, academics, filmmakers, artists, think tank–linked commentators, activists and NGO researchers, who volunteer to take risks in exchange for the benefits that risk brings.)

The mystique of the war zone intellectual, with his or her privileged claims to authenticity, began to emerge in the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Both Susan Sontag and her son, David Rieff (now a seasoned war correspondent from a variety of fronts), went to Sarajevo, and their ideas carried considerably more credibility because of this. Michael Ignatieff, the star professor turned Canadian parliamentarian, is another example, as is the ubiquitous Bernard-Henri Lévy. So too Christopher Hitchens, who, in trying to report from someplace "difficult" at least once a year, has candidly acknowledged his emulation of Orwell. Thus Hitchens traveled to Belfast, Beirut, Sarajevo, Kabul and (in the company of Paul Wolfowitz) Baghdad, before that city's apocalyptic meltdown. When Hitchens began his journey to the right his pro-war arguments had considerable clout, or at least media traction, in part because of where he "had been" and what he "had seen."

Like Fall chronicling the early, disastrous buildup in Vietnam, many mainstream and liberal critics of the current Middle Eastern wars have confined their critique to the tactical errors of the campaigns, the fumbling blindness of the political classes. It is a slippery position whose ambiguities have obvious advantages, since it can be read as a hard-nosed and helpful pro-war policy review or—particularly now that the wheels are falling off the failed Iraq occupation—as a moral and prescient, but ideologically "responsible," case against the war. The instrumentalist critique of America's wars in the Muslim world avoids some central questions, such as: What gives the American-led coalition of industrialized countries that make up the heart of NATO the right to rule the world? Exactly what is

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the West's real agenda? What are the real human costs of its free-market economic nostrums and military aggression?

Yet many of those of us who did ask these questions still felt the compulsion to see the war—the wars—for ourselves. In the summer of 2003, just after the fall of Baghdad and Bush's "Mission Accomplished" speech, when a spirit of triumphalism still infused the "war on terror," there was a sense that if you didn't go, you didn't know. And so a number of writers on the left (Naomi Klein, Charles Glass, Mark Danner, myself) also went to war, in part to ward off the power of "authenticity" wielded by pro-war reporters. (There were, of course, left-leaning correspondents in the region, notably Patrick Cockburn, who has been in Iraq as long as anyone.)

The launching of another war, and the return of the war-zone intellectual, had imbued war reporting with an apparently universal allure. During the onset of the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns, Chris Hedges's book *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* played some part in launching this fascination with the War Correspondent, despite Hedges's disgust for war. Traveling from metropolitan comfort to the dangerous periphery to "bear witness," the War Correspondent was the *flâneur* in hell. I too was swept up in that moment—by both the fascination and the desire for political legitimacy—and went to Iraq and Afghanistan. And it was in these places that I started to read Fall.

As I subsequently learned, it is not simply knowledge that is gained in a war zone but experience, and it can be quite nasty. The typically male lust to watch war is not always so noble as the "truth-telling witness" metaphor would suggest. Nor is the *flâneur* in hell simply in it for the adrenaline. The ugly fact is that for many Western reporters watching war often involves a somewhat sadistic thrill. Even as one sympathizes with the civilians who are killed and maimed and trapped in the war zone, one also tends to identify with the killers, rapists and arsonists—they are very frequently one's hosts, or at least one's most sought-after sources and protectors.

This ugly Stockholm syndrome logic operates even outside the embedding process, where your protectors are also men with guns. And the quiet identification with the soldiers rather than civilians becomes a mental crutch or tool that allows the war reporter to keep going, to override the fear and instinct to flee, to cling to the illusion of invulnerability. If you identify constantly with the victims, you could easily lose your nerve and grow totally sickened by the spectacle of fear and humiliation and waste.

I think of this dynamic when I see the photographs of Fall smiling from inside a helicopter, or read his accounts of how NLF fighters, pounded by US air power, were forced to leave their wounded in the field. Perhaps this wrinkle of identification helps explain Fall's sympathy for the old French imperial overlords and the Americans who followed them. In more ways than one, his safety and sanity depended on the empire. But that identification was, for Fall, never complete, if it ever really existed. As the US effort in Vietnam began to falter, Fall became increasingly pessimistic about US tactics. By 1964, more than a decade before the fall of Saigon, he concluded that the United States was losing.

By the end of his life Fall had become solidly antiwar. His students at Howard no doubt had something to do with this. Black soldiers were dying in disproportionate numbers in Vietnam, and amid the civil rights movement and Africa's decolonization, educated young black people were, among their fellow Americans, the least likely to be seduced by imperialism. Fall also started hanging out with left-liberals like Marcus Raskin, who founded the Institute for Policy Studies, the great muckraker I.F. Stone and Sam Dorsey, a black radical professor at Howard. He was also starting to appear on television, magazines clamored for his work and his opinions were sought by ever more powerful people.

Back in Vietnam in 1965, Fall traveled with the king of US military advisers, John Paul Vann. He and Vann raced down South Vietnamese dirt roads armed to the teeth. Vann—a former US Army colonel who had been driven out of the military (but not the war) because of his proclivity for underage girls—would also later die in Vietnam commanding South Vietnamese troops. By this time Fall was suffering from serious health problems; his remaining kidney was failing badly. Despite operations and powerful medication, his condition worsened, and his long-term survival was in question. Under this cloud, or driven by it, Fall set off for his last trip to Vietnam—that place, that war, that he called a "bad love affair."

On December 8, 1966, Fall returned to Vietnam for a two-month trip. His third daughter had just been born, and he had just turned 40. This time he got too close to the flame. On one last patrol with US Marines in February 1967, he triggered a landmine and was killed. He left his wife and three young daughters. ■

The Strains of Inspiration

JONATHAN RÉE

THE FRIENDSHIP: Wordsworth and Coleridge. By Adam Sisman. Viking. 480 pp. $27.95.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge made quite a splash with his first book, a small volume of *Poems on Various Subjects* printed and published in Bristol in the spring of 1796. He was a young man, 23 years of age, well-known in the Bristol area as a lecturer and dissenting lay preacher, and notorious as a political radical, or—to use the language of the time—a "democrat" and "liberty man." He now took the opportunity to expatiate in verse on his commitment to "equality," his "joy" at the blood-red French Revolution, his longing to live in a community without "individual property" and his hopes of moving to America with his democratic friends to "follow the sweet dream,/Where Susquehannah pours his untam'd stream." He compounded the provocation with a long philosophical poem in which his energetic Christianity was harnessed to the heretical themes of Unitarianism and pantheism and further onslaughts on private ownership as the root of all evil. But what really stirred up Coleridge's readers, at a time when poetry was debated with as much passion as politics or religion, was his peculiar literary style.

Poems on Various Subjects is a book that takes pride in its imperfections. It presents itself not as a temple of transcendent art but a ragbag of remnants from Coleridge's life, of private messages gone astray or pages torn from an intimate journal. Some

Jonathan Rée is the author, most recently, of I See a Voice: Deafness, Language and the Senses—A Philosophical History *(Metropolitan).*

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of the poems are called "epistles," and Coleridge excuses their faults by quoting an anonymous source: "bad verse then seems better/Receiv'd from absent friend by way of letter." Many of the others are addressed to friends or accompanied by notes about the circumstances of their composition. And the main action takes place in a sequence of thirty-six short poems that are disarmingly described as "effusions" because, Coleridge says, they issued from "the communicativeness of our nature" and "do not possess that *oneness* of thought which I deem indispensible in a Sonnet."

To open the book was like entering an untidy bedroom strewn with the unconsidered debris of a complicated life. Coleridge confessed that the poems he was bringing together were "written at different times and prompted by very different feelings," so that the only real connection between them was his own identity. He realized they might be "condemned for their querulous egotism," but he thought he could turn the accusation around. If egotism is a crime, he argued, then poets who give sincere expression to their own states of mind are innocent of it, and the guilt belongs to those who prudishly avoid all mention of themselves in order to put on airs of lofty impersonality. They imagine that their studious "disinterestedness of phrase" lifts them above the pettiness of common humanity, but in truth it does nothing of the sort. Why would they take pains to keep the word "I" out of their verses if they were not uneasy in their minds, and "conscious that this said I is perpetually intruding"? These artificial poets are guilty of the very worst kind of egotism: not the generous ebullience of emotion that "leads us to communicate our feelings to others" but a fetid sense of self-sufficiency that makes us seal ourselves off from the rest of the world and "reduce the feelings of others to an identity with our own."

The most striking feature of *Poems on Various Subjects*, apart from its honesty and verbal agility, is its welcoming warmth of engagement. The word "friend" seems to crop up on every page, and the duties and pleasures of friendship provide the occasion and subject matter for practically every poem: "For what so sweet can labor'd lays impart/As one rude rhyme warm from a friendly heart?" Coleridge quotes an anonymous poet. Friendship is considered in all its varieties and conditions: friendship for dumb animals, for august philosophers or political heroes, for a river ("Unboastful Stream"), for close companions, for lost friends, for a former sweetheart and—last but not least—for the woman who had

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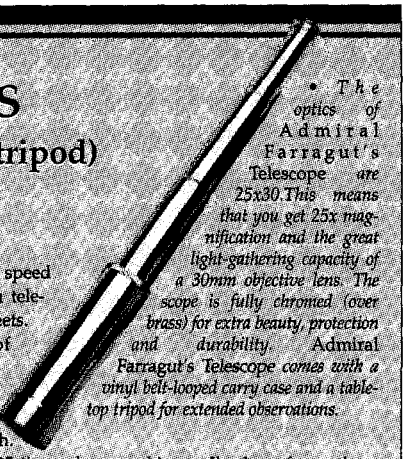

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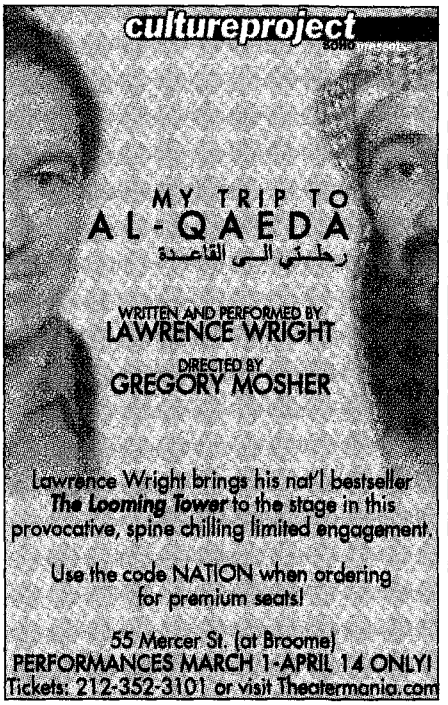

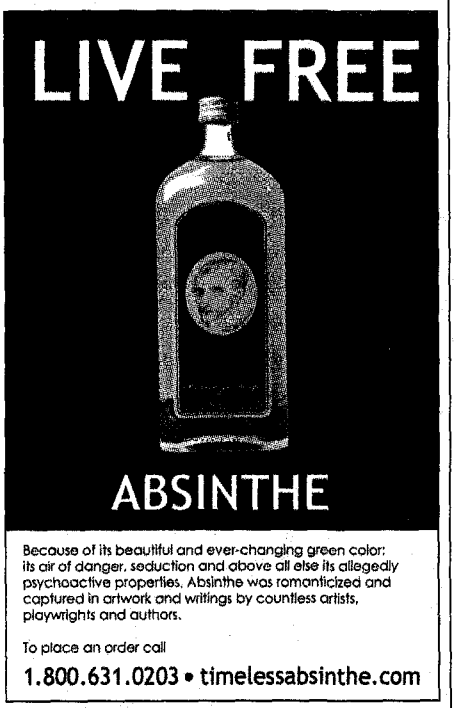
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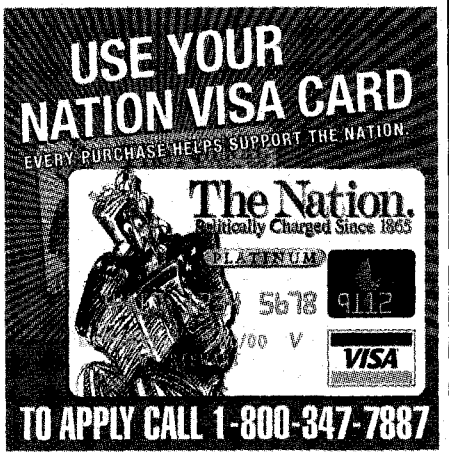

recently become his wife. Friendship as Coleridge understood it was not a matter of sympathy or passive affection but of active solicitude for the welfare and freedom of others.

His dislike of private property was not a mere matter of theory: He seems to have had great difficulty restraining his impulse to give away everything he had. His generosity reached even into the anxious realm of authorship, as he gladly acknowledged his poetic borrowings and filled several pages with poems by his friend Charles Lamb, crediting them meticulously even though, as he put it, "their superior merit would have sufficiently distinguished them." (When he issued a second edition the following year, he cut back his own work to make room for further poems by Lamb and by another friend, Charles Lloyd.) But his boldest act of literary friendship came in a note acknowledging a debt to someone he described as "unrivalled among the writers of the present day in manly sentiment, novel imagery, and vivid colouring"—a notably obscure and unsuccessful fellow poet by the name of William Wordsworth.

Wordsworth and Coleridge were about to forge one of the great literary friendships, rivaling that of Heloïse and Abelard, Marx and Engels, or de Beauvoir and Sartre. The affair was to flare with terrific intensity for a year or two before subsiding into a prolonged coda of resentments, regrets and impermanent truces, and in due course it would become a subject of eager gossip, first among their friends and then in the larger literary world. The story has been raked over hundreds of times since their death, but Adam Sisman's new book *The Friendship* retells it with unmatched thoroughness, balance and verve.

Sisman starts with Wordsworth's return to England in 1792 after a series of sexual and political adventures in revolutionary France. He was a graduate of Cambridge University, 22 years old, not rich but supported by a tolerant and reasonably prosperous family. He was to publish some verse the following year, but without acclaim, and in any case he was less interested in poetry than in the prospect of a republican revolution in Britain—a "philosophic war/Led by philosophers," as he would put it. Coleridge was two years younger than Wordsworth, and poor and precarious by comparison; he too had studied at Cambridge but left without a degree, and he was now wandering through England apparently doing nothing—or rather, as he put it, "nothing but dream of the System of no Property." In London, both Wordsworth and Coleridge orbited round the anarchist philosopher William Godwin and the republican bookseller Joseph Johnson, but like twins in a Shakespearean comedy they chanced never to meet.

Their first encounter seems to have taken place in Bristol in late summer of 1795, but it was not till eighteen months later—after the publication of *Poems on Various Subjects*—that they became intimate friends. Over the coming year they would spend most of their time together, either in Nether Stowey, where Coleridge rented a little cottage that he shared with his wife and their baby son, or in the large house a few miles away that Wordsworth had rented with his sister Dorothy, or in massive walking expeditions in the Somerset countryside. Their wanderings were observed for a while by a Home Office spy, who identified them as "democrats" but not a threat to public safety. He was right: Wordsworth and Coleridge had been disappointed by events in France, and their radical activism was in retreat. Poetry was now their passion instead of politics: They "wantoned in wild Poesy," as Wordsworth put it, declaiming their poems as they wandered through the hills, supplying lines to each other and laying ambitious plans for themselves and for the future of the human race.

Yet the friendship was unbalanced from the beginning: Coleridge was blessed with extraordinary allure, and fame of a kind, and preternatural fluency, but the adulation flowed in the opposite direction. Wordsworth thought "very highly" of Coleridge, but Coleridge considered his new friend "a very great man." Together, he thought, they were going to compose the greatest poem ever written, a philosophical meditation showing how the love of nature could lead on to a love of humanity as a whole and thence to an earthly paradise of peace and universal brotherhood. But he acknowledged that the success of the project would ride more on Wordsworth than on him. "I feel myself *a little man by his* side," he wrote; "& yet do not think myself the less man, than I formerly thought myself."

Coleridge's remark is a perfect description of an idealizing friendship at its best; but it did not tell the whole truth about his relations with Wordsworth. Their collaborations were not going especially well. Wordsworth had begun work on the great philosophical poem, but he was not finding it easy (indeed, it would continue to defeat him for the rest of his long and well-disciplined life). He also withdrew from another joint venture—an archaic ballad about an ancient mariner—leaving Cole-

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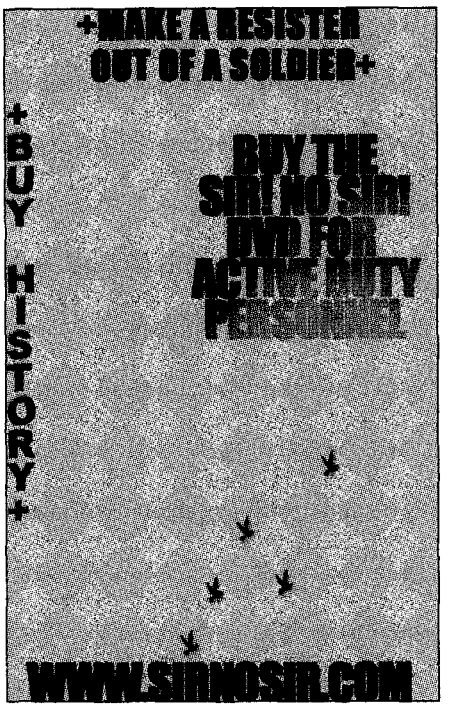
ridge to write it on his own. Meanwhile he was forging a new literary style for himself, serious and lyrical at the same time, and although he might never have imagined it without the promptings of his friend, he could achieve it only by writing independently. Left on his own, Coleridge was flourishing too—among other things, he wrote "Kubla Khan" and "Christabel"—and by the end of their marvelous year each of them had produced, by Sisman's reckoning, several thousand lines of sparkling new verse. It would have been enough to fill several volumes, but they decided to hold back and put together a collaborative book in which their differences would be submerged in a single poetic identity. In the summer of 1798 Coleridge opened negotiations with his Bristol publisher, and the joint work appeared, under the casually paradoxical title *Lyrical Ballads, with a few other poems*, toward the end of the year. The authors were not named, but an advertisement implied that the book was the work of a single author, acting alone.

Most of the poems in *Lyrical Ballads* told simple, sad stories of poor peasant life, but without the political bravado that had been on display in *Poems on Various Subjects* two years before. They were offered to readers not as incitements to indignant compassion but as "experiments...written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure." On the whole this was an accurate prospectus: It fitted the vividness of "The Idiot Boy," for example, and the starkness of "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," and even the plush melancholy of "Tintern Abbey." But there were four poems on which it sat more awkwardly, namely the extravagantly archaic ballad that opened the book, now titled "The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere"; two extracts from an elaborate verse drama; and the stunningly elegant "The Nightingale," subtitled "A Conversational Poem" and addressed to "My Friend, and my Friend's Sister." These misfits were, of course, the work of Coleridge: He had allowed his contributions to be pared back to these four items in order to leave space for nineteen pieces by his marvelous friend. "I feel myself inferior," he wrote, and it seems that he was willingly upstaged.

By that time Coleridge had gotten into the habit of priming his poetic euphoria with large doses of opium, which had the effect of making him frequently ill and unmanageable. He had also begun to complain about his discontented wife, though she could hardly be blamed for resenting a man who seemed incapable of accumulating anything apart from debts. They now had two little boys to look after as well, and although Coleridge adored them, he could barely tolerate the repetitive inconveniences of family life. He preferred to keep company with Wordsworth and with his loyal sister Dorothy, who was blessedly unencumbered by the cares of motherhood, and as soon as *Lyrical Ballads* was ready for printing, he set off with them for an extended trip to Germany. Once they got there the Wordsworths went on a long walking tour, leaving Coleridge to spend the best part of a year in the island city of Ratzeburg, learning the German language and studying the latest trends in science and philosophy, while fending off the pleas of his wife (who had to cope with the death of their younger son on her own) and yearning for the company of "William, my teacher, my friend!"

When they got back from Germany in 1799, Wordsworth went to live in Grasmere in the Lake District; after his return to England three months later, Coleridge moved to nearby Keswick so as not to lose touch with him. By that time it was clear that *Lyrical Ballads* had flopped: It had been widely reviewed, but there was general agreement that the "experiment" in conversational poetry had failed. Wordsworth was not discouraged, however, and decided to work on a greatly expanded edition, incorporating some forty new poems of his own. Coleridge resigned the copyright to him without complaint, and spent many weeks transcribing Wordsworth's drafts, writing careful instructions to the printer and, at Wordsworth's behest, completing his mysterious ballad "Christabel" to round out the new collection. When the second edition appeared, in 1801, Wordsworth's name stood alone on the title page, and "Christabel" had been dropped. In a new preface Wordsworth acknowledged "the assistance of a Friend" who had contributed several verses that "in a great measure have the same tendency as my own," but he also made a gratuitous allusion to the disadvantages of "gross and violent stimulants" and moved "The Ancient Mariner" from its prominent opening position, with a footnote stating that it had "great defects" and that "the author was himself very desirous that it should be suppressed."

Loyal Wordsworthians have always maintained that Coleridge took these editorial rebuffs in good part, but in fact, as Sisman has no difficulty showing, he was mortified. Instead of protesting, however, he spoke meekly of his "unbounded admiration" for what Wordsworth had achieved.



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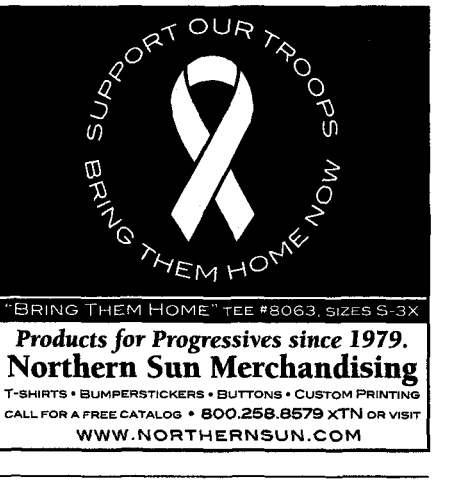
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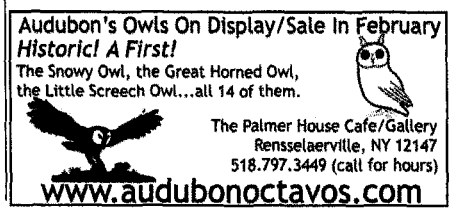
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"He is a great, a true Poet," he wrote; whereas "I am only a kind of Metaphysician." Wordsworth had granted him an incomparable gift of self-knowledge, he thought, because "by shewing to him what true Poetry was, he made him know, that he himself was no Poet."

Coleridge was 28 years old when he decided to give up his poetic vocation. From then on he would spend most of his time in London, so he did not see so much of the man he still regarded as his best and greatest friend. There was a terrific quarrel in 1812 when Coleridge realized that Wordsworth had been saying disobliging things about his domestic habits. Many years later they were sufficiently reconciled to make a second trip to Germany, but it is said that when Coleridge died in 1834, at the age of 61, Wordsworth was quite unmoved.

The second half of Coleridge's life is difficult territory for biographers, who always find it convenient if their subjects fought their way through various youthful ordeals before achieving a definite and decisive self-sufficiency. But this is precisely what Coleridge did not do. E.M. Forster once said that "if life is a lesson, he never learnt it," and Sisman is able to cover his later years in a single final chapter. Coleridge, it seems, is the poet who never grew up: a producer of friendship but seldom a consumer, and a dispenser of delight and encouragement to everyone except himself and his unlucky wife. He tried to make a joke of his private troubles, saying that "if any woman wanted an exact & copious Recipe, 'How to make a Husband completely miserable,' I could furnish her with one." But he was not the type to relish misery: He felt that it "degraded" him and made him "a worse man." And somehow he never stopped writing.

He poured out reams and reams of disorderly prose, including a short-lived periodical called *The Friend*, and a sprawling Wordsworth-obsessed memoir ponderously titled *Biographia Literaria*. But he was not a successful author, and William Hazlitt—himself a beneficiary of Coleridge's goodwill—was probably right when he suggested that he lacked the necessary egoism. If Coleridge contemplated a great library, Hazlitt said, he would not care if it contained an isolated volume that he could lay claim to as an author. He was an absolute democrat in the republic of letters, and he regarded all books as his own. He had the kind of mind, Hazlitt says, that "keeps open house, and entertains all comers"; the only sadness was that when everyone else goes home at the end of the evening, he is left alone and dissatisfied—"the day consumed and its business unconcluded."

What Hazlitt cannot have known was that Coleridge also kept a set of private notebooks—he had filled seventy of them by the time of his death—and when they were published long after his death, it became clear that his old literary exuberance was never extinguished. At one point, indeed, he laid a fascinating plan for an essay on the nature of friendship, and "the multitude of causes that make men delude themselves & attribute to Friendship what is only a similarity of Pursuit, or even mere dislike of feeling one's self alone." Of course, the essay did not get written, but at least the notebooks survived, and for Coleridge they remained "my only Confidant, my only faithful Friend."

Coleridge never lost faith in Wordsworth, and went on expecting him to produce the "true philosophical poem" that they conceived together when they were young. And even though that hope would never be fulfilled, he had the consolation of knowing that Wordsworth had completed a vast autobiographical introduction, which he referred to as his "Poem to Coleridge." He had been reluctant to undertake it, saying it was "a thing unprecedented in Literary history that a man should talk so much about himself," but Coleridge persuaded him that he could carry it off without culpable egotism. "I feel myself a better Poet, in knowing how to honour *him*, than in all my own poetic Compositions," Coleridge said. The poem would be published as *The Prelude* after Wordsworth's death in 1850: It is one of the greatest compositions in the English language, but as an expression of gratitude to an extraordinary friend, it came far too late. ■

FILMS

Winter Light

STUART KLAWANS

INTO GREAT SILENCE • ABBAS KIAROSTAMI: IMAGE MAKER • SÁTÁNTANGÓ

Carthusian monks do not ordinarily allow visitors into their charterhouses, let alone visitors with cameras; but when German filmmaker Philip Gröning asked if he might document the order's founding monastery, La Grande Chartreuse, the fathers kindly said they'd think about it. Sixteen years later, having thought enough, they wrote back to him with permission to make *Into Great Silence*.

These are people who do not like to be hurried, or disturbed. They share just one meal a week, on Sunday, and speak freely to one another only on their weekly walk. Otherwise, for the great majority of the day and night, each monk studies and prays alone in his cell, or does chores at the greatest feasible remove from his fellows. You can picture the bafflement of these men in 1984, when Gröning proposed that his film would help publicize them. You can imagine how much Gröning must have changed by 2000, to be ready to devote six months to living and working in La Grande Chartreuse, handling all the equipment by himself and shooting without lights, so as not to distract the monks.

Because Gröning worked within these limits, you see in his film only the Vermeer light of sunshine as it rakes through a garden window and burnishes a cell's wooden floor; the veiled light of a gray sky thick with snowflakes; the contained red fury of candlelight magnified through glass in an extreme close-up; the isolated, floating pools of light, separated by sheer blackness, in which the monks sit in the midnight chapel, chanting their prayers. Very often, too, light varies within a single shot, as when Gröning shows you a time-lapse view of an Alpine valley, with dawn fog drifting away in the brightening sun to reveal the distant cloister. By the end of *Into Great Silence*, after you've spent 162 minutes of contemplating the monks and their experience, you may wonder whether the better part of our lives is spent just registering the changing light. But then, if we were to stop chattering, we also might register the infinite gradations of sound you hear in the film: creaking floorboards, rustling broadcloth, a shovel's rasp in winter, birdsong in spring and the ringing of bells every day, all day and night long.

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By practicing a simplicity like that of the monks themselves, *Into Great Silence* sharpens your senses and, even more, your awareness of time. You receive no theology from the film, apart from a scene at the weekly communal meal where a monk reads aloud from the works of St. Bruno of Cologne; but gradually, you do get the impression that something immaterial has become present before you, in a kind of time that does not fly or drag or even pass but stays with each monk like a companion.

When time behaves like this there's no story to give away, so you won't object to knowing that the film begins and ends in winter, with identical shots of prayer, falling snow and candlelight. In the middle, as you'd expect, there's a thaw, and summer comes. Toward the beginning of the film, you see two young novices being admitted to the monastery. (The more conspicuous of them is an African named Benjamin.) Toward the end, you see a very old and infirm monk lying in bed, preparing to take his leave. In the life of La Grande Chartreuse, these are big events, which you come to understand aren't events at all. They're more like threads in the fabric that a stooped, long-bearded monk measures out in his attic workshop so he can sew a robe for Benjamin—fabric that another tailor will someday use for patches when Benjamin no longer needs it.

You will notice, by the way, that when Benjamin is formally accepted into the monastery, he passes down a row of seated monks, each of whom rises in turn to embrace the novice and then silently raises his cowl, as if resuming his isolation even in the midst of ceremony. Part of the challenge that Gröning faced was to convey solitude as the essential experience of La Grande Chartreuse while allowing viewers the periodic relief of scenes of human contact. Of these, the most unexpected and exhilarating comes near the end, when the monks go for their walk. Fresh snow has fallen, and so the men, seen in a static long shot, trudge up a hillside and then slide down on improvised skis, or just their bottoms, with their whoops and laughter echoing across the valley. Almost as surprising is a scene of barbering, where the monks groom one another with electric clippers that dangle from an overhead cord. (What's startling isn't so much the technology as the noise.) The most moving of these quasi-sociable scenes, though, is the one in which one monk nurses another by spreading ointment on his limbs. The emotional warmth is palpable; the sight of hands on bare flesh, almost shocking.

I come to the aspect of *Into Great Silence* that may be called experimental, or even underground. In the days of the Warhol Factory, Parker Tyler wrote that the essence of underground cinema is to show things you're not supposed to see. In the 1960s, this material was mostly sexual. Today, when perversion has been superseded by niche marketing, Gröning has found in the hermit's cell one of the few remaining zones that the camera is forbidden to penetrate.

So I don't think I'm merely free-associating when I say that a recurring feature of *Into Great Silence*—a series of protracted shots in which the monks sit one by one for their portraits—is a deliberate imitation of Warhol's *Screen Tests*. For the unsurpassably worldly New Yorkers of Warhol's little films, Gröning has substituted the least worldly of people; but his portraits of the monks still offer a suggestion of underground thrills, and even sex. "You have seduced me, Lord," reads a text before each series of these shots, "and I let myself be seduced."

This hint of the taboo may explain my feelings about a stunning moment that comes late in the film, during another of those leisurely views of a monk praying in

EVENTS

NEW YORK

Robert Fisk

■ Lannan Foundation and The Nation Institute present an evening with the recipient of the 2006 Lannan Lifetime Achievement Prize for Cultural Freedom. In a rare New York City appearance, award-winning journalist Robert Fisk will discuss the politics, wars and civil upheavals of the Middle East. Fisk is the Middle East correspondent for the *Independent* (London) and author of *Pity the Nation* (Nation Books) and *The Great War for Civilisation* (Knopf). Fisk will be interviewed by Laura Flanders, host of Air America's *RadioNation*. March 4, 7 PM, The Town Hall, 123 West 43rd Street, New York City. Orchestra seats $10. Balcony seats $8. Available at The Town Hall box office (www.the-townhall-nyc.org) or at Ticketmaster: www.ticketmaster.com or (212) 307-4100. Funded by Lannan Foundation (www.lannan.org) Produced by The Nation Institute (www.nationinstitute.org).

Worker Education National Conference Call

■ Storming the Heavens: Worker education and social activism commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the CUNY Centers for Worker Education. A conference for labor scholars, educators, trade unionists, current and former worker-students. June 1–2, 25 Broadway, New York City. Proposals are welcome for papers, presentations and panels exploring the history, politics and contemporary significance of worker education in the US and abroad. Teachers, staff and students in worker education programs are encouraged to contribute to the discourse reflecting their institutional and personal experiences and social impact. Labor scholars and trade unionists are especially encouraged to attend and/or participate. www.workereducation.org (212) 966-4014.

Politics and Paranoia

■ The Political Exploitation of Paranoid Anxiety. Friday evening, March 30, and Saturday, March 31, New York University and Cooper Union. Speakers: Slavoj Zizek, Noah Feldman, Avital Ronell, Todd Gitlin, Edith Kurzweil, Ashis Nandy and psychoanalysts from England, France and America. Interdisciplinary conference discusses sociopolitical and affective control in arousing paranoid anxiety through manipulating the media to maintain power relations. Relevant sociopolitical, legal, media and psychoanalytic perspectives aim to elucidate processes of political paranoia in different societies. Organized by National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis and Asian/Pacific/American Institute of NYU. For information, registration, fees, contact: www.naap.org (Annette Overby Conference). (212) 741-0515.

TEXAS

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■ Come to Austin, Texas, for a week of activism and education against the death penalty, March 12–16. The anti–death penalty alternative spring break event is open to both high school and college students. This is the place to be if you want to become a part of the next generation of human rights leaders. Go to the beach to change your state of mind for a week, come here to change the world forever. Students will participate in workshops led by experienced, knowledgeable presenters who will teach them skills that they can use to go back home and set up new anti–death penalty student organizations or improve ones that may already exist. The skills participants will learn can also be used in other issues besides the death penalty. During the week, students will immediately put what they learn into action during activities such as a Death Penalty Issues Lobby Day and a Direct Action Day. There will be opportunities to write press releases, speak in public, meet with legislators and conceive and carry out a direct action. Participants will come away with firsthand knowledge of the anti–death penalty movement and a new understanding of how they can affect public policy. The anti-death penalty alternative spring break event will be featured on *The Amazing Break*, an MTV show featuring alternatives to beer and beaches. There is no participation fee. Register at www.Springbreakalternative.org.

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his cell. After kneeling for quite a while at his bench, the man rises, then unexpectedly approaches the camera, looks directly at Gröning and smiles. In his expression I saw pleasant fatigue, and calm acceptance of Gröning. But there was something more, perhaps: a trace of cockiness, such as you might see in someone who was glad to have been filmed making love.

Love-making in the mundane sense, of course, goes unseen in *Into Great Silence*, though you might wonder about its chances of happening. Liqueur-making certainly takes place, but you don't see any of that, either. I suppose the process is proprietary. But nothing other than that trade secret seems to have been hidden from Gröning, who was allowed to study the monastery in such detail that when he photographed the chapel font in close-up, he captured the surface tension on the water. Thanks to Gröning's care, every tick of the anteroom's wall clock, every passage of footsteps down the vaulted corridor, every fold in a monk's robe or wrinkle beside his eyes or brush of his fingertip against a book's yellowed pages fixes you with the force of an intimate revelation.

Here is a lifetime's worth of spiritual exertion and physical labor, which has been compressed into the six months of Gröning's stay in the monastery and then further distilled into a little more than two and a half hours of film. Rarely is time so intensified, or so pure; and if you want the experience, you need just a little patience. *Into Great Silence* begins a US theatrical release on February 28 at Film Forum in New York.

Although it's called *Abbas Kiarostami: Image Maker*, the Museum of Modern Art's new film retrospective and media installation might just as well be subtitled *Tantalizer*. Granted, Kiarostami's images are often beautiful, with their picturesque outdoor settings and graciously composed space, their pleasing recurrence over the course of a film and gently maintained distance from the subject. These pictures can be as quietly eloquent, as seemingly full, as anything Philip Gröning discovered in his monastery. And yet Kiarostami's show of completeness is also a trick; his visual lyricism a counterpoint to underlying agitation. The crucial element in his work is usually the event outside the frame, the voice dropped from the soundtrack, the figure lost in shadows or night, the missing character, the unexplained motive. If Gröning, like Bresson before him, puts his faith in a contemplative cinema that might allow you to imagine even the invisible, Kiarostami enraptures you with vision only to leave you feeling resigned before absence and mystery.

The ambitious exhibition at MoMA, which incorporates a sidebar at P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center in Queens, offers you thirty-three shorts and feature films by Kiarostami, including the rarely screened conclusion to his great Koker trilogy, *Through the Olive Trees*, and prize-winners such as *A Taste of Cherry* and *The Wind Will Carry Us*. These are indispensable films. Also on view: a gallery installation of the five parts of *Five* (2004), the premiere of the installation work *Summer Afternoon* (2006) and a survey of four series of Kiarostami's photographs.

The exhibition will be on view at MoMA from March 1 through May 28 and at P.S. 1 from now through April 29. The exhibition will travel to the Berkeley Museum and Pacific Film Archive in July and to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in autumn 2007. For information on the New York presentation: (212) 708-9400 or www.moma.org.

Time-stretching, contemplative cinema of yet another sort takes the screen March 3 and 4 at Anthology Film Archives in New York, during a rare theatrical showing of Béla Tarr's *Sátántangó*. Thanks to a DVD version distributed by Facets Video, you could choose to watch the film's twelve sections, spanning seven and a half hours, in the comfort of your home, with frequent recourse to the pause button and beer. That's why a theatrical showing is better. The beer (or peach schnapps) is better left to the movie's characters to sustain them through the perpetual rain in their dying Hungarian village. What you need is strong coffee, and a determination to concentrate on every bleak, mordant, horrifying, devastatingly funny moment of Tarr's masterpiece.

Based on a novel by Tarr's frequent collaborator László Krasznahorkai, *Sátántangó* is the story of a would-be messiah, or cheap hustler, or police informer (choose all of the above) who entices the members of a farming collective to leave behind their mud, their penury, their snooping and degeneracy. Boy, do you get mud, penury, snooping and degeneracy, in what feels like real time! Much has been written (some of it nonsense, I suspect) about the dance-like structure of the film. But what really matters about the exhaustive form, as Jonathan Rosenbaum has written, is that it allows Tarr to get things right.

For information: (212) 505-5181 or www.anthologyfilmarchives.org. ■

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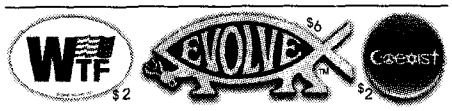

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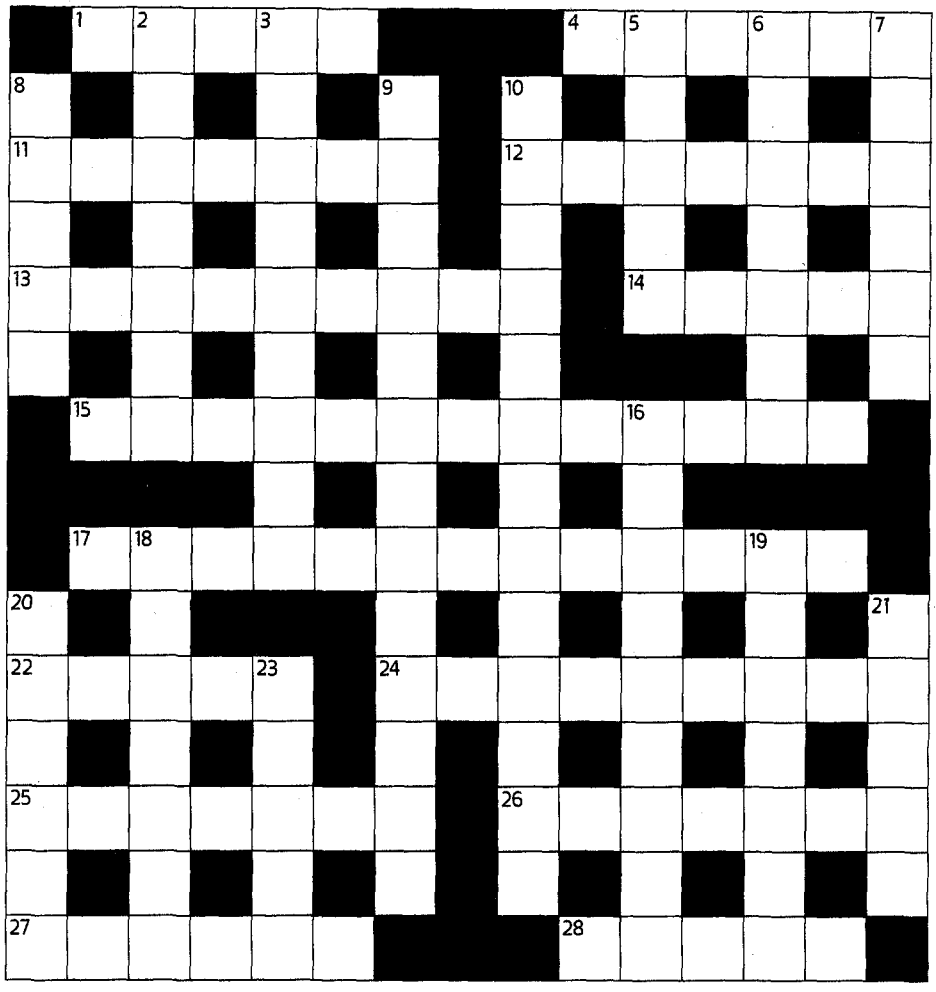

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1 When night flyers return to the South, they might find what Caesar chided Brutus for. (5)

4 If you're looking for secret appointments, make an effort to end up on short streets. (6)

11 Settle the confusing situation, when it's obvious it doesn't go down well. (5,2)

12 Big chief, that fellow the publicity guy! (7)

13 Sort of tear right around certain makings of the money-man. (9)

14 Something extra around the point of a code-maker being here. (5)

15 Like Joseph's coat? (13)

17 A human being Mohammed gets even with—or just the people one notices. (13)

22 Is Erie just one of those lakes? Swell! (5)

24 One trusts this puzzle isn't, like wild lions—sort of blue. (9)

25 The writer made two points about customs, in a way. (7)

26 Does the little devil get to sort of rile just to put one in danger? (7)

27 Like it's back on the well-known one-horse type—just to go up and down the line? (6)

28 Ragged coats could prove a bit racy! (5)

DOWN

2 At this place there's a spoiled tot around—as a way of getting things attached. (7)

3 They should have a superior view of certain plants. (9)

5 Genuine large number found in an entire country. (5)

6 The old warrior like our uncle goes to the ancient city, first class. (7)

7 It shouldn't float when dunked in your coffee—or put on plate. (6)

8 A pretty good-looking way to describe an angle! (5)

9 Having them might make you a bit nervous. (13)

10 A description of certain material for the sort of "prom" finally held with less than a hundred present. (13)

16 Players within range, according to the song. (9)

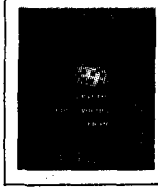
18 Not descriptive of good seers, but what's the point, with the old form having not so much? (7)

19 It might not let things in, with me coming up to where drinks are served with no sign of stopping. (7)

20 What Miss Otis had with no right is for the birds! (6)

21 What the guy behind the bank counter does wears on one, as they say. (5)

23 Opera proves only a sort of 28. (5)



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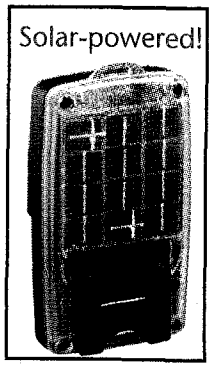

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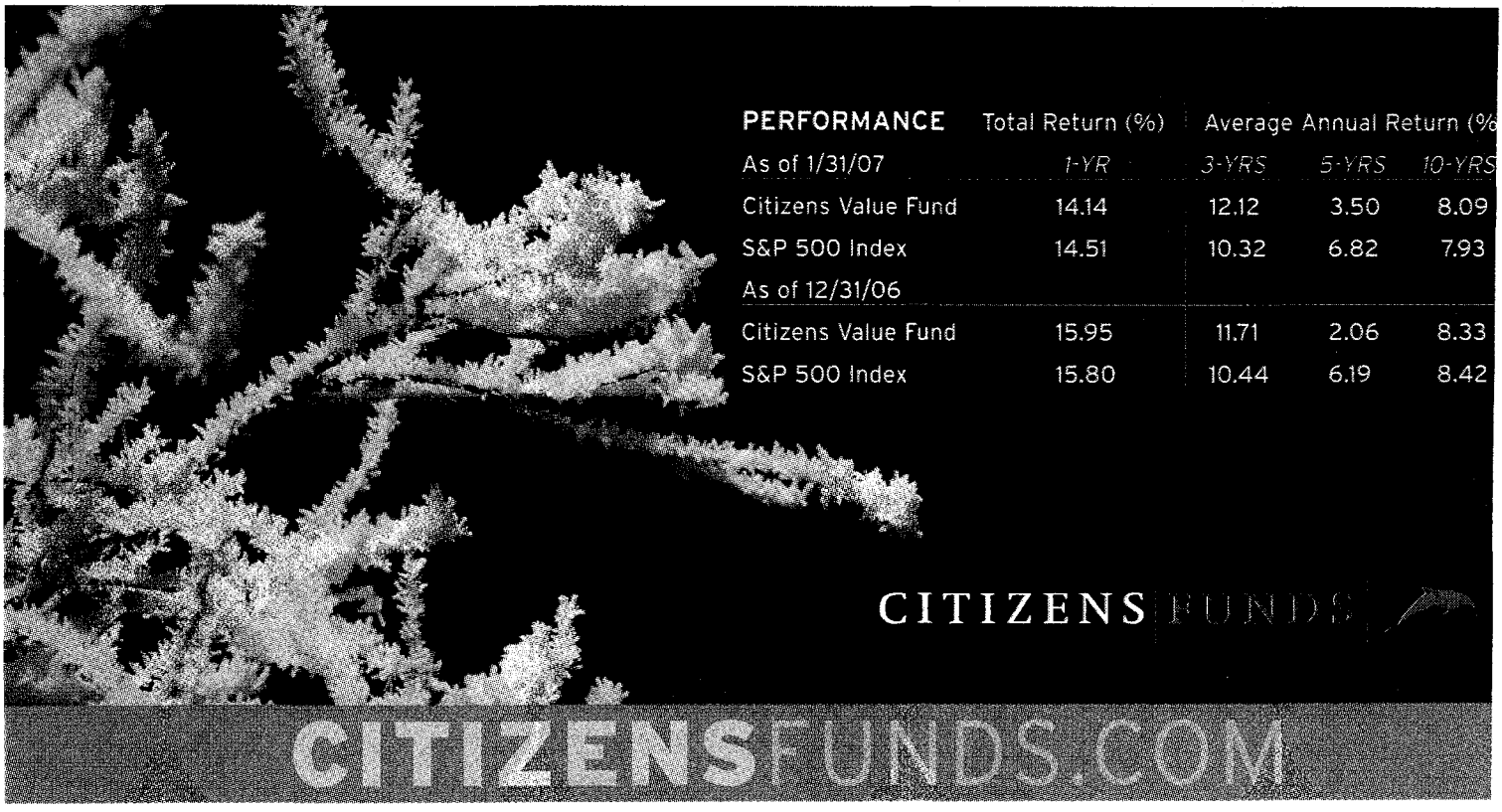

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